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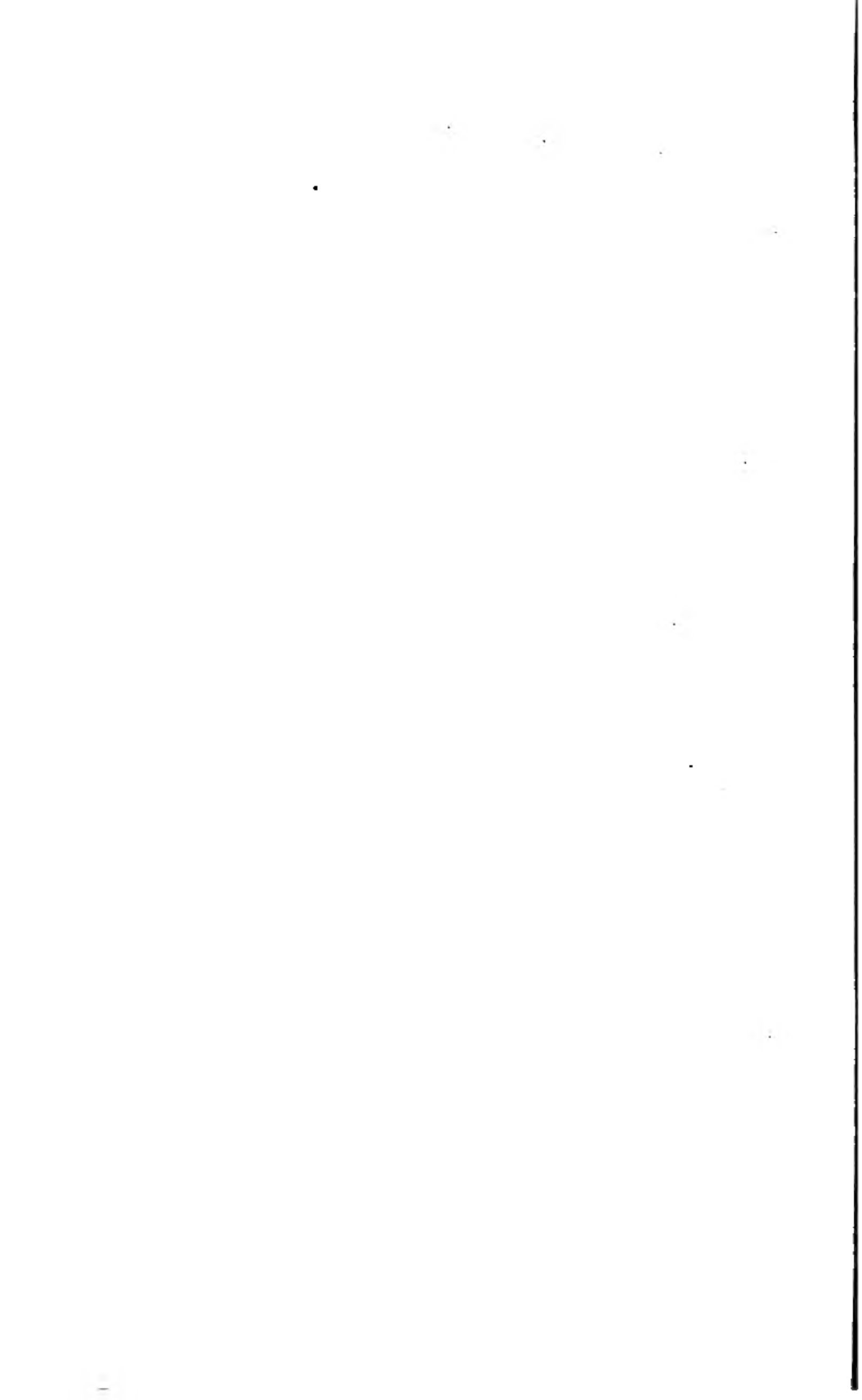
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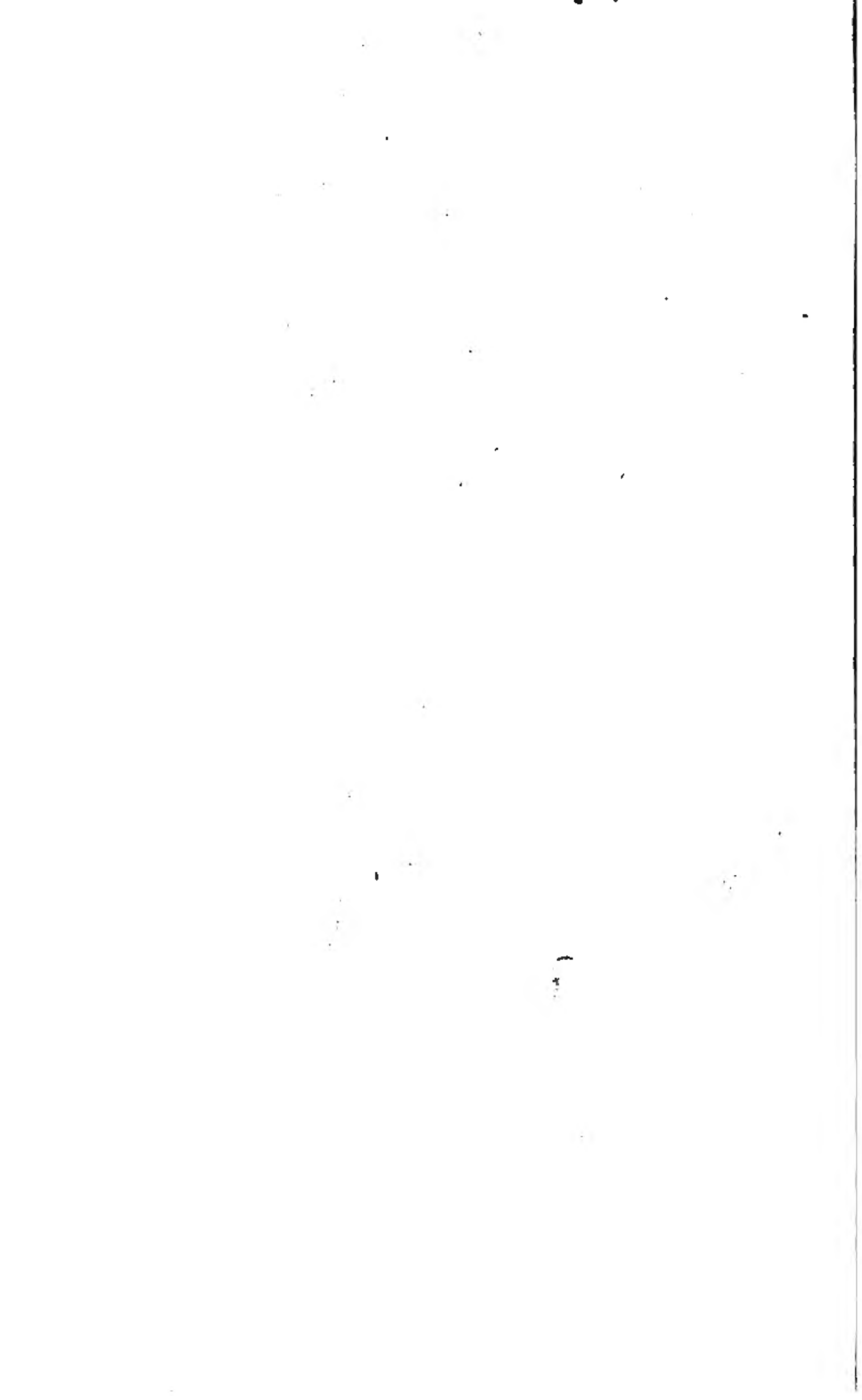
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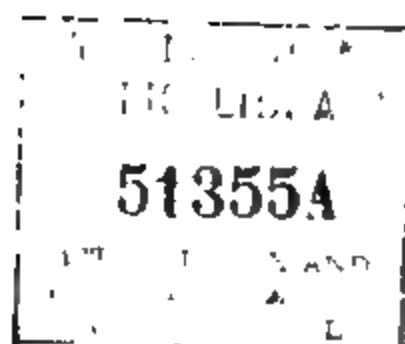


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OF CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS VOLUME.

THOMAS.	HOLLAND, FELIX.
H. C.	HOLMES, T. R. E.
CECIL.	HOPE, CUTHBERT.
ARTHUR, M.A.	LEA, E. A.
IGHAM, BEATRICE.	LEAF, R. M.
REV. E. J.	LEVER, CHARLES.
N, W. H.	RICHARDS, H. CHARLES.
IN, ALFRED.	WASHINGTON, F. G.
ON, J. C.	

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St. James's Magazine.

JULY, 1879.

WHAT WILL SOCIETY SA

A NOVEL.

By MERVYN MERRITON.

Author of "Romances of the Chivalric Ages," "The
woods of Ringwood," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE MEET at Blatherstone Dun Cow, with the inevitable draw and sure find in Lentworth great gorse covert, was looked upon as one of the field days of the E.M.H.

The Squire of Lentworth, though he did not hunt regularly, loved the sport, and any one of his four clever weight-carrying cobs, with his perfect knowledge of the country, would enable him to see as much as he ever cared to see of a day's run. He kept a couple of horses especially for Juliana, fine easy goers, with light mouths, and he had half a dozen hacks of all sorts in his stable. For the Blatherstone meet he had offered Frank a mount on one of them, just to help himself, he said, in taking care of Juliana. They would see the hounds throw off, then canter up to points, through bye lanes, along bridle-paths, and so forth. He flattered himself he knew the country a deal better than most of the old foxes did.

Miles Berrington hunted a little—Lumley less; they kept some high class hunters and a good stable establishment at Westwood; both sported pink, and were numbered among the hunting men of their part of the country.

The great event of the day, as well at Westwood as at Lentworth, was the debut of the Vicomte de Foix, an event which not only is still talked of in local sporting circles, but

"got into Bells' Life" in the account afterwards given, in the columns of that journal, of the day's run.

But this is to anticipate.

Among the first to reach the broad green in front of the little inn which gives the name to the meet, an elevated point at the junction of two cross roads, were the Berringtons and the Vicomte, all on hacks; father and son having united to dissuade their guest from parading before the field his curious equipage. They found, already scattered about, some carriages containing ladies, a few farmers and several lads on ponies, a dozen or so of pedestrians, and several hunters mounted or led by grooms, among which the Vicomte was not slow to recognise Brown Duchess, looking in high fettle. Precisely as the three trotted up one of the roads, the hounds, with the huntsmen, the two whips, and the master's horses, first and second, led by mounted grooms, were seen quietly coming up the opposite road. It was not long before the attention of all present became attracted towards the unknown and foreign looking man arriving with the Berringtons—who were known to everybody—and preparing to mount one of John Speedycut's very best hunters.

"Nice day, Mr. Berrington;" said Will, the huntsman, coming up to the three while the Vicomte's stirrups were being adjusted to their proper length. "Your friend has'nt got half a bad 'un there"—pointing to Brown Duchess—"It's not once nor twice as I've seen this ere mare o' Speedy's lead us all. She's wonderful clever at all sorts o' fences, timber particular, and fit to carry our master himself—and that's sayin' a great deal."

As Will spoke more slowly and less provincially than Speedycut, the Vicomte was able to understand nearly all he said, and although feeling flattered by the notice of such an important functionary as the huntsman of a crack pack of fox-hounds, the foregoing address did undoubtedly occasion a slight shock to his nerves. He made no attempt to conceal from himself that, although his general get up was as perfect as money could make it, yet he must inevitably prove himself a rank impostor if any serious work in the fencing line was to be done.

From the necessity of giving any expression of his feelings at the moment he was saved by the appearance on the scene

of Speedycut, riding a dashing thoroughbred chestnut, evidently very young and very raw.

"Mornin, gen'lemen," exclaimed the dealer, "nicish day, good scent. Strike's me the Viscount's like to get a good run for his money."

This having been interpreted to the Vicomte, he said "Ah ' Indeed!" but to himself he expressed a devout hope that he might get nothing of the sort."

"Now Viscount," Speedycut continued, coming alongside of him, "Excuse my tellin of ye, but you'll 'ave to keep your mare well in 'and. She's apt for to be a bit lazy till 'er bloods up, and may go a little careless. Hullo! Bless my soul, why you've got no spurs! That'll never do in the raspin' country we're like to get into, Better take mine, I'll get a pair from one o'my men. Here! Jim!"—to the man who had ridden the mare to covert,—“Just pull off these 'ere spurs o'mine, and buckle 'em on to the Viscount's boots."

Protestation being out of the question, the Vicomte was, to his secret dismay, and to the suppressed amusement of sundry lookers on, invested with those incentives to equine ardour which, to tell the truth, he had purposely avoided, viewing them in the light of a complication of his difficulties, and an actual tempting of providence.

By this time sundry members of the E.M.H. outsiders in and out of scarlet, farmers large and small, and a few lady riders have arrived. The Vicomte asks his friend whether the field is not almost *au grand complet*? Miles says it is so, and points to Sir Harry just cantering up, followed by the Lentworth party.

"Ah! ah" cries the Vicomte, "*la belle Juliana, avec son preux!*"

Here follow numerous greetings, and an introduction of the well mounted Frenchman to the popular master; after which the signal is given, and the hounds are trotted off to the covert.

Leadstone had come out this morning in wonderfully high spirits. Owing to his having risen earlier even than common, to look after some draining work on a distant farm, he had escaped any damping conversation with his wife touching Juliana and Frank; he was pleased to note the satisfactory

progress of the match on which, without much reflection, he had set his heart, and in the boyish spirit that sometimes animated his simple nature, he was expecting "no end of fun," out of the Vicomte's hunting début. Bidding Frank look to Juliana, and keep him and his famous blue-roan cob in view, he cantered alongside of the Vicomte, and entered into conversation with him, as he told Miles Berrington, to take a rise out of his foreign guest.

"My dear Monsieur le Vicomte," he began, "it's my dooty as a friend to tell you how the eyes o' the field's upon you, and as you've got a reputation to make, you must mind your P's. and Q's, for you've committed a mistake to begin. Your costoome, allowin' for its shinyness, is quite the right thing, all except havin' a cap instead of a hat. Nobody's supposed to wear a cap but the man that 'unts the 'ounds. There's Sir 'Arry—Master—you know, got his 'at, because Will 'unts 'em to-day. When he 'unts 'em 'imself 'e'll wear a cap. So, you see 'avin' a cap, you'll be took by outsiders for the 'untsman. What you've got to do, then, is to ride as forrard as if you *was* the 'untsman, and that's what you can do on Brown Duchess if, ahem! if your 'eart's in the right place."

Formidable phrase—"If your heart's in the right place"—as the Vicomte had gathered from the use made of it in "Bell's Life" and other English sporting journals! However he thanked Mr. Leadstone for the hint, promising to do his best to cover the error, irretrievable for this day at least, into which, acting under the counsels of a too zealous Anglo-Parisian tailor, he had fallen.

Lentworth great gorse is, as all the (sporting) world knows, a covert of considerable extent, and a stranger to the country may easily become isolated from the field, when the hounds are thrown into it. This happened to our Vicomte, and was not altogether regretted by him. In the first place he felt that he required time to establish himself comfortably and confidently in his saddle, and to become, as it were, personally acquainted with the Duchess; in the second, the fact of his being alone, or nearly so, seemed to intimate that no very strong work was expected to be cut out on that particular side of the covert. The spot on which he found himself was at an angle of the large expanse of gorse commanding two lanes,

his only companions being a couple of young lads mounted on smart fiery little ponies, and a rough-looking farmer on a wall-eyed, flat-sided, under-bred three year old, about sixteen one in height. These four had remained stationary and silent for some five minutes, when the farmer said to the Vicomte energetically but in a suppressed voice, "There! did ye hear that, sir?"

"Hear what?"

"There again!" And the farmer winked.

The Vicomte marvelled within himself what "That," and "There" meant, and felt much curiosity as to the meaning of the farmer's wink.

Again the farmer uttered a suppressed exclamation indicative of mingled joy and surprise, as he pointed to the covert with his whip; Brown Duchess also appeared to have heard something out of the common, for she pricked her ears, and moved restlessly in the sticky mud.

"Darned if that beant a find!" from the farmer.

The Vicomte, though not quite comprehending the full purport of this expression, ventured to give it the assent of "All right!"

A few moments more, and the distant whimper of a hound in the covert was borne on the wind towards them.

"I believe ye it *be* all right too!" whispered the farmer hoarsely. "Why, that's old Harlequin! And there! t'others is a takin' it up!"

This was indeed the case, and another minute had not elapsed before the entire pack chorussed out the joyful intelligence of a find. The Vicomte, decidedly more alarmed than elated, was marvelling within himself what was to be done next, when the farmer touched him on the shoulder, and said, "Now sir, you'd better pull your mare a bit over this way, along 'o me. I'm blest if Charley beant inclined for a break o' this side. Back there, you boys! Quick!"

The Vicomte and the boys, at once recognising the farmer's authority, respectively followed these instructions. Presently there was a slight rustling in the low copse that fringed the gorse.

"Look out!" the farmer whispered. "Darn they boys! *Will* you keep your whips still, you two?"

Something now moved in the copse not twenty yards off, and again Harlequin's note, as rapidly approaching, was heard, followed again by the cheery chorus of the pack nearing the edge of the covert. Hardly had the farmer laid his hand on the Vicomte's shoulder, as if to restrain him from making a premature demonstration, when a magnificent dog fox popped over the bank and ditch close to them, and bowled away down one of the two lanes of which they commanded the view.

"Hold hard!" whispered the farmer, as the excited Vicomte, by an irresistible impulse, raised his hand. "he's not clean away yet. If he gets back, he'll be here again, and they'll chop 'im up in covert!"

Reynard thus, by the farmer's judicious intervention, left to himself, broke for good into the open.

"Now then, its all right!" cried the farmer, and forthwith he gave a ringing View—Holloa!

On came the hounds, dash, crash, out of the gorse, and through the copse. "Tally ho!" again and again from the farmer and the boys—the Vicomte doing his best to imitate them.

"We've got rare places," quoth the farmer, as the hounds scrambled over or struggled through the ditch enclosing the covert, right in the fox's track; "Don't be in a hurry, you boys! Steady's the word—There's time enough—Let the dogs do their work. I promise yer, sir—" to the Vicomte—"we're a goin' to see a deal more nor a good many o' the cracks. You see they've all pushed for t' up side o' t' woods, never expectin' he'd break this side, as he have done. I aint quite clear but we'll 'ave to 'unt the 'ounds for Will—Oh! no! 'ere comes Will! Gone away! Gone away!"

In truth Will now appeared shoving his horse through the thick, and to ordinary riders impenetrable, gorse, presently made his way through the fringing copse, topped the bank and ditch, into the road, and following in the direction indicated by the farmer, was quickly up with his hounds. The farmer told the Vicomte they might now "go"; and thus these four with the huntsman, not only had a clear start of the entire field, but literally seemed about to have the thing entirely to themselves. The country being open, the pace at once became

severe. Charley was, in fact, making straight for that "raspin'" country intimated by Speedycut to the Vicomte.

But the fortunate five were not destined to have a permanent hold on their monopoly. For a good ten or twelve minutes they had it and kept it, the hounds going at a racing pace, and without a check, or, to the Vicomte's unspeakable satisfaction, any fencing worthy of the name. To be sure the Duchess topped a couple of hurdles, and went through two others which had been knocked down between the farmers' raw young 'un and the boys' ponies—the latter already pretty nearly pumped out. At the expiration of these ten or eleven minutes, there was a check at a spinny, which by the time the hounds had hustled their fox through it, and had got him again well into the open, enabled the hitherto mistaken ones from the upper side of the gorse to make up all their lost ground.

"You got a undeniable good start, Vicomte," quoth Speedycut—speaking slowly and precisely, as he galloped up to his furrin' customer, "and now just look out for the fences! keep your mare well together—don't spare the steel at the right time—I'm blest if this arnt a straight fox and no mistake!—one as, if he don't take the turn short up to Ringwood Chase—for the devil a point can he make but that—must take us right on end to Denbury High Woods—a good nine mile as the crow flies!" And the old horse-dealer was right—at least to a certain extent. The fox did get his head straight for Denbury High Woods, with the intention—as far as possible vulpine intentions were readable—of seeking shelter in that distant but safe harbour. The country was for the most part grass, with some really terrible fencing—places whereat grief might be confidently anticipated, even for older hands than our Vicomte. His fencing début was at a big post-and-rails in a mucky bottom, and—harden his heart as he might—he felt as if his last moments were come when he became aware that his mare was swinging down towards this formidable impediment at a pace which, while in it lay the only chance for horse and rider, of itself almost made him giddy. Any attempt to stop the Duchess was—even to his perception—far more dangerous than to trust blindly to her tried powers, so, resigning himself to his fate he clapped his hand—(I grieve

to say)—to the pommel of his saddle, shut his eyes, set his teeth hard, and—landed on the other side, not only unhurt, but to his immense astonishment, still seated on his mare.

“Viscount” he presently heard behind him, “One word wi’ ye!”

He turned and saw Speedycut, who had followed him over this bad place.

“Do just let me tell ye one thing” the horse-dealer went on very confidentially, “At a big place like that ’ere post-and-rails it’s allowable for to steady yourself *be’ind* so”—illustrating—“but for the love o’ mercy never *before*! It makes all the difference betwixt a man’s bein’ carried by a ’orse and bein’ runned away with by one—Ye’ll forgive me, sir; but the eyes o’ the field’s sure to be on anybody as I puts on Brown Duchess—not to mention your wearin’ a cap—I can tell ye we’re in for a great thing—and what’s more,”—sinking his voice to its lowest pitch—“we’ve got ‘Bell’s Life’ out wi’ us to day—I knows un well—You’ll be in them columns next week as sure as eggs is eggs! I’m pretty safe to be axed your name, and”—grinning—“I shall give it right or wrong, accordin’ as ye does credit to the mare—Begs parding for the freedom but you know business is business—That mare’s price to any stranger axin’ is Four ’undred! Now, Viscount, what you’d better do is to stick to me. Though I never shirks nothin’ as I’m obligated for to go at, I’m not a bit in the mind to leave my old woman a ’sconsolate widder—and more nor that—ye sees I’ve got rayther a raw ’un under me, and he isn’t by no means a fust rate performer *for* a raw ’un—so ye may be sure I won’t take ye over anything unnecessary—and where I lead, ye needn’t fear about follerin’.”

During this lecture, delivered slowly and impressively, as if the speaker dreaded the consequence of not being fully comprehended, the hounds had been going at a rattling pace, and now, so burning was the scent, that for a few minutes they seemed almost to fly along the ground. The Vicomte, who had kept his eye on Speedycut, as counselled by that sage, presently observed him taking a line a little aslant, and to the left, of the general field, so hastened to come up beside him.

“Somethinks’ a comin’, Viscount, as is goin’ to turn a few

on 'em," quoth he, "you and me'll take it at a place I knows of—There! d'ye see?—right afore us!"

The "somethink" in question proved to be a complicated affair, consisting of a high rotten bank, a stiff hedge, a yawning ditch swollen by late rains to the proportions of a brook, with a considerable drop towards, and a no less rotten landing-place in, the meadow beyond. The spot chosen by Speedycut for himself and his customer, as that presenting the fewest difficulties was somewhat lower down the line of fence than that generally selected; thus, as longer time was required to reach it, the Vicomte had the opportunity of previously seeing the performances of the majority of the field; and the spectacle was not encouraging to him, for many were the cases he noted of separation between riders and horses, the former rising muddy, scratched, and battered, the latter straining and struggling through the slushy ditch, or scrambling desperately up the sticky bank.

"Ye'll 'ave to give my Lady the steel, and no mistake!" cried Speedycut, "else darned if she won't jump short! Now then stupid!"—This to his own chesnut,—"kim over!" 'And with this shout, and a tremendous crack of his heavy whip over the animal's hind quarter, the horse-dealer crammed him at it. By his tutor's side, and scarcely a moment after him, the Vicomte, once more shutting his eyes, setting his teeth, holding on like grim death to his saddle, this time behind not before, and in very desperation going with right good will into the Duchess's flanks with the steel, put her at the awful place. It is more than probable, that, in his inexperience, he checked her in her flight, this neither he nor Speedycut ever knew, but what is certain is that, with all the good will the brave mare threw into her spring, she did jump short, and brought her rider down a cropper, she coming on her knees on the further bank, the Vicomte being shot clear over her shoulder into the field. Nor was he alone in his misadventure, for, on getting up, and shaking himself, he perceived that even Speedycut, the experienced Speedycut, had likewise come to dire grief. The raw chesnut having, in spite of the iron hand that held him, swerved in taking his leap, for all his immense stride had been unable to accomplish the entire width. He had, in fact, simply put his fore feet into the ditch, pitched the dealer, to

quote that celebrity's own expression, into next week, which being strictly interpreted, meant about two yards into the field, and having done so, scrambled out and galloped off, leaving his rider and the Vicomte with the brown mare standing quietly between them.

"Why you not get upon the Duchess and go after your own horse?" asked the Vicomte.

"That I will, and thank'ye, Viscount," replied Speedycut, "and 'ere's a bit o'luck, they're come to a check; them sheep 'as crossed the scent. Come on best pace your pads 'll carry ye to yon 'urdles, and wait there till I brings back yer mare." Saying this, he mounted the mare and galloped after his runaway young 'un.

It was true that a check had occurred, and as there was every reason to suppose, from the cause assigned by the horse-dealer. This check, if vexatious to the field at large, was welcomed by the Vicomte as a short respite from what he now began to realise as the terrors of the chase.

The foreigner wearing a cap, riding Speedycut's well known mare, Brown Duchess, and to all appearance not going badly, had naturally attracted a good deal of observation. Nor was he likely to become less "the cynosure of neighbouring eyes" when he was noted as having "come down a buster," in company with so many good riders. Accordingly on reaching the hurdles—the sheep penned in by which, frightened, either by the fox jumping in among them, or by the cry of the hounds, had broken down the enclosure, and bolted in all directions—he was addressed by several persons who had reined up near the spot, on the subject of his fall. We all know the tone of mingled commiseration, congratulation, and chaff adopted under such circumstances towards a man who is evidently none the worse for his mischance, so with a single exception the reader shall be spared the various phases to which the dismounted foreigner was called upon to reply as best he might.

"Good morning, Monsieur le Vicomte," the master of the hounds said to him, with cheerful politeness, "you have come to look at our East Middleshire to some purpose. A good start nearly all to yourself, as pretty a sharp thing as we've had for some time and a personal acquaintance with our Eng-

lish soil in very good company. I believe if I had'nt been on positively the best water jumper in my stable, I should have got into that nasty brook ditch myself—Black Man's ditch they call it—But I fancied I saw you catch your mare after your fall. By the by, I think it's highly probable I shall buy that mare of Speedycut's from the manner I've seen her carry you to day."

Whether this was meant as a compliment to the Vicomte's riding, or to the mare's perfect going under a man who could not ride a bit, was difficult to decide from the speaker's tone. As was to be expected, the Vicomte adopted the sense favourable to his own vanity, and acknowledged it as such; after which he explained the circumstances under which he was for the moment without the mare.

Ten minutes elapsed before Speedycut returned on his own chesnut, leading the Duchess, nor was he at all too soon, for a move was evidently now being made by such of the field as were nearest to the hounds.

"It's a Holloa!" cried Tom Leadstone, who, with Juliana and Frank, had been among the first to address the Vicomte in the manner above mentioned; "It's off to the right, up the hill. There again! Come along Juliana! Our line lies along that there edge." And the Squire of Lentworth led the way indicated by him, Juliana and Frank following.

And a Holloa it was—though rather distantly and feebly uttered.

"It's a boy!" cried somebody.

"Ay, there he stands," added somebody else. "I'll lay five-pence to fifteenpence its a false 'ollosa!" shouted Speedycut. "Them boys 'ollosas for 'ollerings sake."

"Devil a bit o' false 'ollosa," put in the farmer who had shared the Vicomte's good start. "Just look at Will."

In fact Will was now to be seen by all, waving his cap in the direction of the boy's hollosa, indicating thereby his belief in it. Instantly there was a general move that way, in which the Vicomte was about to join, when he felt his shoulder tapped by a hunting whip.

"I say Vicomte," exclaimed the tapper, who proved to be Lumley Berrington, "Stop a bit, and listen to me. You've been doing very well. My advice to you is to let well alone.

It has been short though sweet. All things considered you've not had a bad three guineas' worth. Going away to that holloa means taking a tremendous brook out there to the left, and what's more, taking it in cold blood, for at best it's a toss up which way the fox has gone, judging from the pottering, uncertain hanging about of the hounds. Now that sort of larking may be very well for some fellows, my sprightly young Pater, for instance, but it isn't the thing for me, and I don't recommend it to you."

"Do you think the boy's holloa was false?" asked Miles, who now came up.

"Never mind whether it was or was not, Pater," answered Lumley. "If it was, Charley has had ample time to take care of himself; if it was not, I'll tell the Vicomte exactly what's going to happen. You see that piece of fallow half way up the hill, don't you, Vicomte?"

"Fallow! fallow! Ah! En jachère, Yes, yes."

"Good, Now follow yonder line of hedgerow trees as far as the spinny. Well, if one thing on earth is more certain than another, it is that our famous straight fox has done us, changed his mind, slipped into that spinny for breathing time en route back to Lentworth gorse."

"I won't say you are right, Lumley," said Miles, "but admitting you are, if the hounds dislodge Charley again from Lentworth gorse to-day, I'll eat him, brush, pads and all."

"You hear that, Vicomte; then the best thing you can do," Lumley resumed, "is to canter with me quietly up this hill side, and get into the wake of Leadstone and his young people. At the top we shall come to a line of gates, which, with your undeniable timber-jumper, you have my full permission to go over, but which I shall take the liberty to go through. We shall, in the meantime, see all our sanguine friends down along the bottom, going over, or into that big brook; and I do assure you there is no fun equal to it, when you're convinced in your own mind the labour's all taken in vain, and that you, who stand on your own proud eminence, are as safe to come in for whatever sport there may be as those who are pumping out their horses in the bottom."

The Vicomte, it need scarcely be said, asked nothing better than to follow this prudent advice, so away the

pair cantered in the direction named. Needless also is it to add that maugre Brown Duchess's notoriously superior style of timber-jumping, her present rider preferred going through the gates to topping them.

The result proved the accuracy of Lumley Berrington's judgment. The small boy's holloa had, it appeared, been given, as is the practice of his kind, full ten minutes after he had seen the fox. The latter, evidently an old stager versed in the art of saving his brush by his heels, had, after taking breath in the spinny, been seen going best pace, but at a safe distance from his pursuers, and by an artful circumbendibus, in the direction of the identical gorse covert whence he had been driven about an hour before.

This bloodless run did not end the day's sport, but the day will probably have been already long enough for the non-sporting reader, more interested in the principal than the subordinate personages of this story.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Late in the afternoon Juliana and Mr. Leadstone, having stopped to take luncheon at Westwood, returned to Lentworth to find Maria Duhamel and her step-father already arrived from London.

Mrs. Leadstone, who was entertaining them, probably bored by the occupation, at once handed Marie over to Juliana, and the Squire having carried off Oldham to his private rooms the two girls were left together. Though their meeting was cordial and affectionate, it would have been clear to any third person that the manner of each towards the other wore a certain air of constraint. The cause of this soon became apparent. Juliana, after a few common-place remarks said, looking away and blushing, "I parted an hour ago from, from, somebody whom I only this morning discovered to be a former acquaintance of yours—a Boulogne acquaintance. Can you guess his name?"

"Yes," Marie replied, trying, though unsuccessfully, not to look as confused as she felt. "Mr. Francis Aylesmere. I only heard on my way down this morning that I was likely to meet him in Middleshire."

"Your informant," Juliana hastened to say meaningly, "was Mr. Heartly, who travelled with you!"

"It was Mr. Heartly," Marie replied in a careless manner, "no doubt Mr. Aylesmere told you his friend was coming down with us."

"He did, Marie. We were out with the hounds. My father and I stayed for luncheon at Westwood. I suppose you heard this from my mother?"

"No, Mrs. Leadstone merely said you were out with Mr. Leadstone. She neither mentioned Mr. Aylesmere nor any one else, but she seemed very much pleased when I told her that we had for a travelling companion, a good part of the way, Mr. Cotherstone."

"What, Mr. Claude Cotherstone?"

"Yes; he was on his way to spend Christmas with a family of the name of Saville. He left the train two stations before we did. He begged me to tell your mother he will ride over to Lentworth one day before he leaves the country. He made himself very agreeable. He told me stories about some of the people in the fashionable world whose names are familiar to me—I'm afraid he's a bit of a quiz—laughs at everything, and indeed everybody, but he is generally well informed, seems to know a little on most subjects. I really don't wonder, after all, that, although his manner is peculiar, one should, on the whole, prefer a light-hearted good-tempered insouciant person like him to some of your very excellent but prosy people."

Now Marie had obviously in all this, true to the erroneous theory she had formed on the occasion of Juliana's visit to her at the Maison Beaubois, been pleading specially, less for Claude Cotherstone as a suitor, than for the woman who could have brought herself to accept him as such. She was, accordingly, not a little taken aback when Juliana exclaimed sharply, "My dear Marie, keep your laudations of Mr. Claude Cotherstone for my mother, whose pet he is, I don't want to hear anything about him."

"Really, Juliana, I—I thought you—"

"Never mind what you thought, dear—Let's change the subject. Come, now, tell me something about your nice friend, Mr. Abel Heartley, I hear such an account of him from—You know who it is I mean. He appears to be one of those

superior, high-hearted men who, to the shame of our sex, are not appreciated as they deserve to be."

Yes, Frank had enlightened Juliana respecting Marie to the extent of giving up Heartley's secret. He had said no more, beyond suggesting to Juliana that it would be advisable, for the present, to tell Marie nothing about their own engagement. Subsequent events showed that he would have done better if he had gone further, even to the extent of imparting to her who was now his affianced wife certain suspicions which he entertained on the subject of Marie's feelings towards himself.

Christmas day falling on Saturday, the day popularly known as Boxing-day was kept on Monday. That evening had been fixed upon, after much discussion and negotiation between Lentworth and Westwood, for a reunion, at the former, of the parties filling the two houses, in addition to some of the neighbours of both. The gathering, though quite an impromptu affair, was expected to number between sixty and seventy. The elements of amusement were not likely to be wanting in such a house, and in addition to music and dancing, Juliana had persuaded Frank to give the company a reading from Shakespeare.

Among other arrivals one was announced which created no little astonishment to some who heard it. With the name of the Savilles, county magnates of importance, was coupled that of Mr. Claude Cotherstone.

Claude's greeting to all was, as might be expected of the man, perfectly unembarrassed; it was, moreover, as cordial as was consistent with his usual frigid and impassive bearing. Juliana, in particular, he addressed with a sort of fraternal kindness, and Frank, on whose arm she was at the moment, they being about to dance the first quadrille together, as if he had been the familiar friend of long years.

The origin of this demeanour, as indeed also of his appearance at the party, was that, having heard from the Savilles the fact, already pretty generally canvassed (of course in the strictest confidence), of the "coming event" at Lentworth, he wished to judge for himself as to the truth of the reports, in order that he might, upon his own observation, base his own future conduct. "For," thus had run the line of argument this cold-blooded calculator held with

himself, "if the event is to come off, I can't prevent it. I'm not the man to bite a file, or kick against the pricks. I had as strong a fancy for Juliana as it's in me to have for any woman, undoubtedly she'd have made me a creditable wife, apart from the territorial question. But I'm not going to put my spirit into mourning for the loss of her; neither am I going deliberately to cause the door of Lentworth to be closed in my face for all time to come. Quite the contrary! As *ami de la maison*, I may, in more ways than one, find a solatium for the loss of a wife."

Claude's first post of observation was taken up in the quadrille forming as he arrived. He never danced, save as a matter of business. Here was business to be done, so he stood up with one of the Saville girls, as the vis-a-vis couple to Juliana and Frank.

"He's come to watch me!" was Juliana's first thought. "He shall take something by his motion!"

And the proof that he did take something by his motion was seen in his hastening to ask her hand for the following quadrille. Round dances were too much for him, besides which the quadrille is the conversational dance par excellence, and conversation was his object. His request having been favourably received, he boldly attacked the subject after the following fashion. "If I know anything of the human countenance, I have discovered an important secret. A chasm is about to be made between me and what would have been a great happiness, your love! Don't start, I'm sorry, deeply sorry, but I trust you and I may always be friends, sincere friends. Frank Aylemere's a fine hearted fellow, a gentleman. A sort of reparation for his family misfortunes is done him by your father in giving you to him. I know I can make a friend of him, if you allow it, which I see you will. Thanks!"

To an address so apparently loyal and friendly it was impossible for an ingenuous and ardent, somewhat too ardent, nature like Juliana's not to respond amicably; moreover the suddenness of the attack threw her off her guard. The consequence was a hesitating answer which left the astute Claude nothing to learn. And thus it came to pass that he of all men was made the first recipient of her important secret.

The hour immediately preceding supper was devoted to

Frank's reading, or rather recitation, for he used no book, of the principal scenes of *Romeo and Juliet*. He had proposed his favourite *Hamlet*, but Juliana had appealed to the sentimental element in his character for *Romeo and Juliet*, and of course her wish was his law.

The success was incontestible, but all present were not of one mind as to the expediency of the proceedings.

Miles Berrington said to his son, "I think he had better have let it alone. He's a deal too good for an amateur, as Mrs. Leadstone, who is not aware that he has ever been anything but an amateur, is very likely to see. I always told him he ought to allow the foot-light period of his life to disappear, treating it as a mere youthful frolic."

"Yes," Lumley replied, "that incident of his taking to the stage ought to be blotted out from his past as something thoroughly *infra dig*. I like him for himself, and I think he may yet follow a career fit for his birth; but other people, taking Society's view of the question, will say, 'An Actor! Bah! Can anybody point out an actor who has been able to become anything but an actor?'"

Tom Leadstone alone took a bold practical view of the matter. When Miles asked his opinion, he said "Read! Why shouldn't he read? Mrs. L. must know the 'ole truth about him goin' on the stage sooner or later. I don't think she can say much unpleasanter things of him than she has said and does say. As to the main question of his marryin' Juliana, perhaps it might ha' been better if he'd chose some other profession—for instance, with ever so much less ability, he might ha' got called to the Bar. Then, like enough, at sixty-five he'd ha' been made a County Court Judge, or a Revising Barrister."

"Or," said Miles, falling in with the Squire's view, "he might have been a banker, and got a baronetcy, even a peerage; or he might have sold tea and figs, and become Lord Mayor of London with the honours of knighthood. He might even have been a tailor, and created Baron by the Grand Duchess of Gerolstein."

"Any how, Miles, a professional actor he has been, and what's the use of my puttin' on blinkers about it, calling him an amateur actor, when fellows minded to tread on my corns

may flourish the north country play-bills in my face, and ask, Pray who is this Mr. P. Francis?"

A discussion also took place between Claude Cotherstone and the Vicomte de Foix, in the course of which the Frenchman almost waxed eloquent on the views he advocated.

"You know, Vicomte," thus Claude, "the young reader must not be judged as—Aw—Aw—you and I should be judged. He was on the stage and no mistake—Aw—Aw—went the entire animal; you understand that piece of English Aw—Aw—?"

"Oh yes, I understand. He took the profession of actor, au grand serieux, eh? Mon Dieu, Je n'en vois pas le mal. Perhaps I speak too much as a Parisian. With us, you know, all art is held in high estimation, dramatic and lyric art no less than any other. We are more logical than you English, and we reflect that the natural gifts required to constitute a really great dramatic or lyric artist are so numerous as to exclude even from the mere competition all but the most highly gifted. To the very few out of those who ultimately succeed, and attain great reputations, we bow with reverence. We do more. We hold it a duty of the state to encourage the highest standards of art. We give subventions to national theatres viewing them in the light of schools of art. We allow provision to famous artists in their decline. Indeed as regards dramatic artists, the hope of becoming an Associate of our Comédie Française, an institution unique of its kind, suffices to maintain purity and loftiness of style in actors who might without such hope, degenerate into mere public amusateurs. The moral of all this, as bearing on our young friend Aylesmere, is that were I Monsieur le Squire Leston, I should be proud to give him my daughter, all charming and beautiful and great heiress as she is."

"My dear Vicomte, I most warmly echo—Aw—Aw—your opinion, making of course—Aw—Aw—allowances for the unfortunately low estimate formed among us of the Aw—Aw—theatrical profession."

"A profession," the Vicomte exclaimed, with a certain asperity, "for which Ben Jonson and Shakespeare have written, which has numbered in its ranks Garrick, the great Kemble family, with numerous other men and women of

genius, and which has supplied your exclusive nobility with more than one beautiful and honoured wife ! ”

“ Well I must admit,” Claude replied, warming up a little under the effect of the Vicomte’s artistic ardour, “ there’s—Aw—Aw—a good deal to be said on that side. I myself have the honour to be classed among the—Aw—Aw—patrons of our English drama, such as the English drama now is ! I’m looked for in the stalls on the leading first nights. I volunteer to go when Offenbach and Lecocq are given. We let their music alone, but dilute the librettist’s dialogue—awfully moral public ours as to dialogue, but—Aw—Aw—it requires the interference of a Lord Chamberlain to set bounds to their toleration of busts and legs.” Here, perceiving that his hearer began to exhibit symptoms of impatience he changed his tone, and proceeded at once more seriously and more briskly—“ I know, Vicomte, I know all about it ! You’re thinking what a melancholy state of dramatic decadence we must have reached when we are content to accept Parisian rechauffés as our staple food, Mais, mon ami, que voulez vous ? To produce Shakespeare has hitherto been regarded by our managers as to court ruin. Matters seem now slightly mending in that respect, and Shakespeare has been found on some recent occasions to pay. I see your look of scorn, Vicomte—but all’s in that word—Pay ! In this world of eating and drinking and rending out of apparel nothing can stand that won’t pay ! ”

“ Monsieur Claude ! ” the Vicomte laughed out, “ Pardon me for saying I am surprised to find so much solid bon sens in a mere man of pleasure ! ”

“ Ha ! ha ! Vicomte, I’m solid enough and sensible enough when I like. Don’t set me down as the imbecile I sometimes appear. Apropos, a fellow once said to me at Tattersall’s—he was notoriously one of the sharpest among the sharp fellows who frequent those rooms—He said, “ I’ll tell you what, dear boy, if I could only manage to be taken for a fool during forty-eight hours in these rooms, I should make a book that would inevitably realize me a splendid fortune.”

This *mot*, with its sporting associations, touching, as it did, upon one of the Vicomte’s peculiar foibles, at once turned his ideas, so to speak, on another pair of rails, and thenceforth le sport displaced the drama in the conversation of the two ac-

quaintances. It is more than probable that in the course of such conversation, Claude contrived to do a satisfactory stroke of business upon some of the leading future racing events. Be that as it may, their colloquy was only terminated by Mrs. Leadstone herself, with the intimation that supper was ready, and that the Vicomte was expected to conduct her to the said nocturnal refecton.

CHAPTER XXV.

Oh those ball suppers! when youth is in its prime, when the blood courses wildly through the veins, when passion is strong, when the brain is chained to the triumphal car of the heart! Those ball suppers, aided and abetted by the few dances which immediately follow them, have a good deal more to answer for than is generally believed. With regard to the suppers themselves, it is of course assumed that from the delicate consommé to the jelly-enveloped plovers' eggs, they exhibit the handiwork of a master in his arts, and that the Roederer, the Perrier Jouet, or the Möet are of perfectly unquestionable source, in a word that they are upon a par with those spread by the Lentworth chef.

The supper, saving to a few lingerers, was over; the first after-supper waltz had begun. As was in character with an impromptu party, the orchestra consisted of but a single performer on the piano-forte, now one, now another of the girls or younger married ladies taking her place before the instrument, and immolating herself for the general benefit. Juliana had, in the morning, produced Metra's not particularly new, but most inspiring set of waltzes, "Les Roses," requesting Marie Dahamel to practise it for the evening; it was an especial favourite with her, she said, as indeed it might well be! To this set of waltzes had she danced her first waltz with Frank on that memorable occasion known to the reader. She had more than once reminded Frank of these waltzes, declaring that she could never play them without shedding happy tears, so suggestive were the melodies flowing through them of tender memories.

To "Les Roses," then, we now find Juliana and Frank, for the second time, and at an interval of nearly half a year, whirling in that intoxicating dance whilom stigmatised by Byron, and which now-a-days the most stern-eyed matrons rejoice rather than otherwise to see their daughters engaged in with eligible partners.

Marie played "Les Roses" as a true artist plays everything, not despising dance music merely because it is dance music. Moreover, of all its class the waltz is surely the most *entrainante* to the dancer and the most captivating to the hearer. She added to her subject the magic of her fine touch, the grace of her delicate conception. Her performance had by degrees attracted to the piano a little knot of the seniors and such juniors as were not dancing; among others the Vicomte de Foix and Claude Cotherstone, who seated themselves near to and facing her.

"Said I not to you, she is une grande artiste!" whispered the Vicomte. "Assurément, mon ami, Weber playing his own Invitation à la Valse could not have been more sublime!"

It was shortly before de Foix made this remark that Marie had, for the first time, turned round to survey the dancers. For the greater part of a minute she continued thus to follow the movements of the circling crowd. When her eye returned to her notes they were perceptibly filled with tears, a tremor was visible in her lips which had suddenly become bloodless, while her hold on the keys became momentarily feeble and her touch indistinct.

"Mais voyez, donc! Is Mademoiselle not ill?" asked the Vicomte of Claude.

"No, no!" whispered Claude, "but these musical temperaments are so susceptible to external influence. There! Her little emotion, whatever its cause, has passed away. She now plays with even greater nerve than ever."

And so she did, though infusing into her performance an element of bitterness and sorrow little dreamt of by those who were borne away on the tide of her rhythmic power. Once more she looked round at the dancers, but this time she returned from her survey with less troubled countenance, though a sort of sad surprise appeared to fill her dark eyes in place of their wonted lustre, as she drooped wearily over the piano.

Both the Vicomte and Cotherstone seemed to be interested in her ; in reality while the former regarded her with the kindly feelings of a compatriot and a lover of the arts, the latter scanned her with the eagerness of one who speculates on a game of human passion played before him. Claude, in short, had just noted in that barely perceptible exhibition of Marie's feelings, which she herself little deemed there were near her eyes curious enough to observe, the confirmation of a suspicion conceived very soon after her arrival at Lentworth, that she secretly loved Frank Aylesmere.

"Who knows," was his instantaneous thought, "but a time may come when I shall find some use for this discovery?"

Meanwhile among the many couples to whom the first after supper waltz brought the full measure of the satisfaction each was capable of enjoying, to Juliana and Frank it was fraught with all the happiness it could derive from past associations and coming anticipations. But ah ! as they whirled on, the lithe woman's form readily yielding to the clasp of the man's supporting arm, little recked they of the torture that sight was inflicting upon her to whom they owed the chief part of their enjoyment.

The Vicomte, had he been in a position fully to realize the situation might possibly, even though he risked the commission of an anticlimax, have moralized thereon in the homely but expressive proverb of his own country which says "On ne peut pas faire une omelette sans casser des œufs."

Marie, partly from mental abstraction, partly in a sort of desperation, had continued her performance at far greater length than was set down for her, probably playing the waltz thrice over, before, wearied herself, she turned to discover that she had wearied out all the dancers, Juliana and Frank included, although they had been the very last couple to give in. When she rose she received a round of applause ; while the dancers crowded about her to thank her for the delight she had afforded them. Alone the thanks of Juliana and Frank were wanting, for they had quitted the ball room immediately after the waltz.

The Vicomte repeated to Mademoiselle Duhamel his flattering compliment about Weber and his "Invitation," but not finding it duly appreciated, ceased to pursue either the theme or the lady. Claude Cotherstone having been engaged

by the squire in some agricultural discussion, the Vicomte pounced upon Heartly, with whom he was soon deep in pictorial art.

Marie then wandered away through the suite of rooms, hoping to find solitude in one of them, but as there were none in which some conversationists were not seated, she passed on to the conservatory. It was only lighted by a couple of small coloured lamps, and coming as she did, out of the glare in the rooms given by some hundreds of candles, she was unable to distinguish objects very distinctly; nor was it till she had nearly reached the centre that she perceived the figure of two persons seated almost hidden among the foliage of the camelias and other rare shrubs. The floor being carpeted, her footsteps were inaudible to the two concealed persons, who, regardless of her approach, continued their conversation.

Suddenly she paused, as the thought flashed across her, "By a fatality I have been led where I may learn the worst from their own lips and I *will* learn it! My act is despicable and unpardonable, but these are temptations too strong for resistance!" Then she crouched down to listen to the conversation carried on by Juliana and Frank. They spoke in low tones, but the excited state of her nerves so intensified her powers of hearing that not one word escaped her.

Juliana was saying in reference to something that had gone before, "By this language of Mr. Cotherstone, one great difficulty is removed. My mother can no longer delude herself respecting him."

"My darling," Frank then said, "your conduct in connection with him has all along been so consistent, that Mrs. Leadstone must long since have abandoned the hopes she once entertained. He may, though I hardly think it likely, speak to her as freely as he has to you. But even supposing he does, you must not flatter yourself she will at once abandon her prejudices against me."

"My own Frank, I have long felt that we must seek our happiness apart from these prejudices; and after what Mr. Cotherstone has said to me, knowing myself and my nature, I feel I can no longer trust myself to wear the mask."

"It is not much of a mask, dear one, I believe everybody about you sees through it, your mother included; though

it is her policy to ignore me and all that concerns me. As for your father, he has given me half a dozen covert invitations to confide in him."

"Of which you have not availed yourself?"

"Because there is but one step from confiding in him to encountering the ordeal of your mother's questioning. Between him and me, you know, there is sympathy, between Mrs. Leadstone and me—"

"None, I fear, Frank. What a sad prospect! And all on account of that miserable money."

"Yes, she will reproach me because I have it not, yet she will spurn my proposal to earn it in the the way so easily open to me."

"Then, Frank dear, what's to be done?" Juliana asked appealingly. "Does it not occur to you that you are but putting off the evil day?"

"Of course, Juliana. Your woman's instinct at once detects the weakness of my position. Come soon, come late, I must pass through this ordeal of an explanation with your mother, or I must abandon the hope of calling you mine."

"And would that alternative be so utterly intolerable to you, Frank?"

The force of these simple words was in the tenderness of their utterance, and in the manner with which, like a bird fluttering to the hand that caresses it, Juliana, while uttering them, clung to her lover.

"The proof that it would be intolerable, my adored Juliana," was the answer they elicited, "and that I dare not even contemplate such a probability is that I will not risk it. Say what you think fit to your mother, I will speak to your father to-morrow."

"And take the consequences, eh, Frank dear?"

"And take the consequences, Juliana darling."

With the exception of a concluding kiss of a somewhat long duration, in all this there was nothing particularly romantic; the character of the conversation was even rather commonplace than otherwise; which was to be accounted for by the fact that these young people, though loving one another with genuine and profound devotion, had, one and the other, been, from the commencement of their attachment, hedged round

with considerations utterly material and matter of fact, beneath which the romance of their love was for the time buried and hidden away. Still there it was, and circumstances permitting would, no doubt, appear in all the intensity it must derive from their respective natures.

But upon Marie's hearing, not the most impetuous torrent of eloquence wherein passion ever found utterance could have fallen with deadlier effect than this comparatively prosy discussion as to the opportuneness of one or the other mode of proceeding. It was only on the journey between London and Lentworth that Heartly had told her Juliana and Frank were known to each other. It was but within the last few minutes that their demeanour during the waltz had raised her suspicions as to the nature of their relations; and now, with sudden and overwhelming force had come upon her the discovery that they were engaged lovers! Here then fell at once the scaffolding and the edifice of her own life's romance. The object of her secret devotion and the object of her youthful friendship had—altogether ignoring her—passing her by as if she existed not—joined hearts, and were preparing to join hands over the ruin of her own hopes. But exactly in proportion as she was distracted by these thoughts did she feel humiliated at the part of spy she had stooped to play. Anxious to effect her retreat, yet almost fearing, in her excited state, to trust to her limbs for support, she had already turned to steal away, when she heard Julian say "I mean, before I speak to my mother, to confide my secret to Marie Duhamel. It will make her so happy!"

"Do you think so?" Frank asked in a voice wherein Marie fancied she could detect a slight hesitation. But even had she wished to hear more, to do so would have been impossible; for at this moment she perceived, through the vista of open doors, Mrs. Leadstone approaching the conservatory. She hastened her steps, and thus the two met midway in the room adjoining the conservatory."

"Have you seen Juliana?" Mrs. Leadstone asked somewhat impatiently.

"I have been looking for her myself," she answered evasively, "to propose a duet." All this time she was endeavouring to draw Mrs. Leadstone away from the conservatory, thinking to

herself, "Let them enjoy their happiness undisturbed; their encounter with her will come soon enough!" Marie, with her vigorous intellect and unselfish nature, did not hesitate a moment to throw herself into the cause of those dear to her, though that cause was to be gained at her own proper cost. Her heart's martyrdom, however, was destined to commence earlier than she looked for. On retiring for the night, Juliana followed her into her bed-room, and it was with a shudder that she saw her friend and pupil draw towards the fire one arm chair, beckoning to her to take the other. She knew too well what was coming.

"Marie dear," Juliana commenced, "I have something of great importance to tell you, when you've done rattling with the fire."

"Now then," Marie said, ceasing to busy herself with the poker, and trying to look unconcerned, "what is it?"

"Something Marie, which concerns the happiness of my whole life."

"Indeed! nothing less important than that?" "Tell me, Marie, have you the least suspicion of anything? I mean, have you observed any,—any—? Come, kiss me, you know there are not many subjects on which we girls trouble ourselves to make confidences."

That impassiveness on Marie's part which thus confused, and to a certain extent checked Juliana, was not the result of any assumed indifference, but of her utter powerlessness to give the encouragement asked for, which once given, would, she instinctively felt, instantly bring to Marie's lips the dreaded name. She sat staring in abstracted silence at the fire, which fiercely as it glowed, failed to alter by a shade the pallor of her fixed countenance.

"You seem as if you did not hear me," at length Juliana said, "and how pale you are!"

"Pale, Juliana! Oh surely not. I'm too hot to be pale!"

"Hot, Marie?"

"Yes, feel my hand,"—giving it,—“But come! What is it you have to tell me? I'm all attention."

"Oh Marie! I'm so happy!"

"You seem so, dearest." As Marie spoke, under some reactionary influence she shed a few tears. They relieved her,

but she could not conceal them from Juliana, who asked "What is the matter with you?"

"Why think of me? Tell me about yourself and this—this great happiness!" Marie continued with a nervous inability absolutely beyond her control.

"How can I talk of myself, Marie, when I see you looking thus?"

"Thus! How? What do you mean?" And rising suddenly she crossed over to the looking glass. "I see I am pale," she continued, "I suppose I have over excited myself, dancing and playing,—yes, playing that set of waltzes you made such a point of having to-night. I danced you all, as I heard Mr. Berrington say, off your legs."

"Les Roses, yes, I'm very fond of that set."

"Has it not some more than commonly pleasing association for you?" Having asked this, Marie sat down quietly, and looked steadily into Juliana's face, as if nerved for the encounter.

"It has, Marie, indeed it has. To Les Roses I danced my first waltz with, with him who will one day be my husband! You know with whom I danced the set to-night, for I saw you looking round at us; so did he."

"He! you mean Mr. Aylesmere!" she said with desperate calmness.

"I do. Frank Aylesmere. We are engaged. You are, with a single exception, the only living creature but ourselves who know it. What do you think of my prospects, judging from what you remember and what you have heard of Frank?"

"I think you are a happy girl, and may look forward to be among the happiest of women. I believe he is in every way worthy of your fondest devotion."

"That is his already, and will never be wanting to him. We don't conceal from ourselves that we have yet some difficulties to encounter. My father will approve my marriage, not so my mother. Frank's fine temper will often be severely tried."

"Ah! if none of us had heavier trials to endure than those of temper!" Marie said, rather to herself than Juliana, in a sad and contemplative manner.

Juliana, who in the flood of her own joy wished the like to

all around her, fancying she understood the allusion contained in Marie's last words, continued, "They say there is contagion in such events. Who knows how soon you may come to me with a like tale to that I have brought you to-night? You shake your head, rather sorrowfully too. How can a certain person who shall be nameless, if he has eyes, taste, heart, have been much in your society and not return your affection? Nay Marie dear! Don't make me think I've been indiscreet!"—for Marie had started as one might start who is suddenly and sharply struck by an unseen hand,—“But when last we met in London, I formed a belief that you—you have a more than friendly regard for Mr. Heartly, while he is insensible to your merits.”

“Mr. Heartly!” Marie cried, springing up, “were you thinking of him?”

“Yes. Was I mistaken?”

“Never more so! How could you imagine anything so—? But I now find that I was equally in error about you. I dare say you'll laugh when I tell you I imagined your affections were fixed upon Mr. Cotherstone.”

“Marie! Marie! your notion was little else than an insult to my judgment and my heart. I can hardly forgive you the aspersion. Mr. Cotherstone! Ha! ha! ha! But as to yourself, if not Mr. Heartly on whom is it you have fixed your thoughts? For I know there is somebody. Ah! well, if you are not disposed for confidence at this particular moment, I must await your own time.”

“Indeed, Juliana, whenever there is anything to be told of the—the sort you allude to, I promise you shall be the first to hear it.”

“With that promise I must rest contented, and now good night.” Saying which, Juliana rose and kissed Marie somewhat less tenderly than was her wont. She felt that a return was due to her own expansiveness, and that no return of this sort had been made. There was, she thought, to say the least, a little mystery under all this, and between friends such as they were, no mystery little or great should be allowed to exist. But, with the hope that time would clear it up, she dismissed the subject from her thoughts.

It was otherwise destined, and we shall find that out of this

little mystery came complications fatal to the happiness of more than one person in whom we are interested.

(To be continued.)



TO BEATRICE, (WITH WHITE HAREBELLS).

HAREBELLS, they are your flowers, my lady love,
And so, I send these blossoms unto you.
Spotless as are the flowers that bloom above,
Holy and meek like her I send them to.

Would I could lay them in your slender hand,
And hear you thank me in that gentle tone,
Tender as music in some sunny land,
Music that has a witch'ry all its own.

Fortune still wills it, we must dwell apart,
But lay these white flowers on thy whiter breast,
To listen to the throbbing of thy heart,
For 'tis the music they will love the best.

Then each will answer from its silver bell,
Will sing a song so tender and so true,
And all the story that each song will tell,
Is but the story of my love for you.

N. C.



PIERREFONDS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "KHISMET," &c.

NOBODY seems to know anything of Pierrefonds or Pierrefonds les Bains beyond the mere fact of its existence, and yet it is one of the most charming and attractive little places possible!

The physical characteristics of a locality generally seem to contain a sort of forecast of its history and ultimate destiny, so it is evident that Pierrefonds must have been originally intended for a sanatorium, for it is sheltered on all sides by the stately and magnificent trees of the forest of Compiègne; it lies on the banks of a silvery lake, whose waters cool the air even in midsummer, and it has two of those mineral wells, a sulphur and an iron one, which are said by an old writer to be "the most wonderful and powerful remedies spontaneously prepared by nature for the benefit of man." But in addition to these advantages, Pierrefonds can boast of an atmosphere which could only be found in a land of vineyards and sunny skies; and there are days there when the air is so very clear and sparkling and everything above and around looks so fair, and sweet, and bright, and beautiful, that each separate sense seems a minister of enjoyment, abstractions appear to become sensuous, and you almost feel as if you could see into the very heart of things, and hear the voice of nature as she chants her low, soft hymn of praise to the Creator. Besides, although this favoured spot is encircled by hills, they are not in any part of sufficient altitude to shut out or obscure the light. On the contrary, it might be affirmed of its people, as Pliny said of the inhabitants of Rhodes, that they have never lived a single day without seeing the sun. And as we know that each cloud which dims the brightness of the sky retards the vital activity of the plants on which its shadow falls, that fruit, flowers, and leaves are alike the air-woven

children of light, and that without it the children of men become sickly and stunted, the importance of an abundant supply cannot be overestimated. A sojourn at Pierrefonds therefore is likely to be beneficial to both body and mind ; for while its waters cure the diseases of the former, the purity and elasticity of its atmosphere exercise a most happy influence on the latter, and not only cause a surprising exhilaration of spirits, but enable the lungs to perform their functions with such ease and freedom, that life, which is elsewhere a burden, at least to the consumptive and asthmatic, becomes there a positive pleasure.

But perhaps the greatest charm of this charming little place is, that it is still fresh and unhackneyed, and that the trail of that ubiquitous animal, the British tourist, is not yet over it. Indeed on reading the list of its visitors for the season, which begins in May and ends in October, I found that it contained but one British name, videlicet " Mr. Black, of London," and neither the proprietors nor the servants of the hotel could speak a word of English. It is, however, so much frequented by members of the French nobility from Paris and other parts of France that one hears the very best French spoken there.

You can get from London to Pierrefonds in twelve hours if you like ; but it is better to linger for a while at Compi gne, to which some historic interest attaches from the fact that it was there that Joan of Arc was taken by the English, and because the place is still redolent of her, Hotels, &c., being called by her name, and the spot where she was captured being still regarded by the people as hallowed ground. Compi gne is built on the Oise, which is there spanned by a fine bridge with three arches, erected by Louis XV. It has been for centuries the favourite residence of Kings of France, who were devoted to sport, on account of its contiguity to the forest ; but apparently that is all that it had to recommend it, as it is a sleepy, superannuated looking little town, not prettily situated, and without any fine buildings except the Hotel de Ville and the Palace. The latter, however, is interesting because you see there the private apartments of the late Imperial family ; the boudoir of the Princess Mathilde, which had formerly the honour of being occupied by Marie Antoinette ; the Prince Imperial's bedroom, that of his mother with its large gilt bed, and her dressing

room, containing a bureau which is covered with fine Wedgewood plaques ; the music room with its tapestried walls and buffets of Japanese and Chinese make ; the family reception room in which the Imperial sporting parties used to meet on hunting days ; the Emperor's bedroom with its sofa bed and invariable and inevitable bust of Napoleon the Great in marble ; and, lastly, his library, from which it is said that the only book abstracted by the Germans was a copy of Cæsar, with pencil marks made by himself.

The rail from Paris to Compiègne takes you through a part of the country which, though sufficiently well timbered, is flat and featureless, the view being bounded by low-lying hills which rise on both sides like walls, without any diversity or beauty of outline whatever. But from Compiègne to the Baths the road is delightful and has all the charm of novelty, being cut right through the forest on the confines of which, the pretty village of Pierrefond lies.

This little village—it would seem absurd to call it by any more pretentious name, contains 1800 inhabitants and four hotels, the best being the Hotel des Bains, which stands well back in its own grounds, and with its appurtenances of the Bath House and mineral wells, &c., &c., presents many attractions. There is a small island on the lake which is connected with the Hotel grounds by means of a bridge, and which is so thickly wooded with acacias and other trees that they close in round it so as to form it into a sort of colossal bower ; and on a shining summer day it is really a pretty sight to see the bathers, after they have left the Bath House, sitting about in bright hued dresses under the shade of these by no means melancholy boughs, laughing and chatting and enjoying the sunny present without a thought of the future, as French people only can do. Taine says that the English get the most uses out of life, but his own countrymen and women extract the greatest amount of happiness and enjoyment from it ; and perhaps he is right, as after all, that total absence of care and extreme lightheartedness must constitute a *kind* of happiness, and probably the best and highest kind of which they are capable. For though, of course, much of their uniform and extraordinary vivacity is due to the atmosphere they breathe and the climate they live in, a still greater portion of it seems

to arise from the fact that they never by any chance think of death. With us a remembrance of the great change which awaits us runs like a solemn undertone through the music of life, and is heard at intervals, even when the joybells are ringing their loudest, and hope singing its sweetest songs in the heart ; but with them it is simply not heard at all. They regard the present world in which they live, and move, and have their being, as "the be all and end all," frankly confessing their conviction that they have their Paradise or their Purgatory in this life, and that after that, all is over ; and thus having no future to think of or prepare for, they just gather the roses that lie about their path, and only occupy themselves in seeking to make them bloom as long as possible. Unfortunately too this sort of feeling seems to pervade all classes ; for it is well known that a large majority of the lower orders are infidels also ; and though in the upper ranks there are still a few who are believers, and would fain bring about a better state of things if they could, their small amount of influence is quite powerless and ineffectual to stem the tide of infidelity which is rapidly encroaching and threatening to spread over the whole length and breadth of the land.

Now it must be confessed that amongst all these laughing faces a pretty one is very seldom to be found. And certainly the women of the place do not lend enchantment to the scene either, for they happen to be singularly ugly specimens of what by a euphemism of their language is called *le beau sexe*, while the handkerchiefs which they tie round their heads, and which are exactly the same shade as their mahognay coloured visages, only serve to render their plainness more remarkable. I noticed, too, that the peasant children wore hideous little skull-caps on their heads, for no reason whatever, apparently, as their hair seemed to be both rich and abundant, but the blouses of the men are of such a bright blue that, when contrasted with the vivid green of their surroundings, they form what painters call a very pretty bit of colour. They always look scrupulously clean too. But then there is no such thing as squalor or abject poverty in the place. The climate is beneficent, the soil generous, the wants of the poor are easily supplied, and there everybody seems to be content and prosperous.

Pierrefonds was suffered to remain in unmerited obscurity until comparatively lately; but within the last few years Dr. Sales Girons has made a reputation for it, and his system of inhaling pulverised mineral water is practised there with so much success that his compatriots now rush to the place in crowds every season. Young men and maidens, old men and children, elderly couples who have passed many a milestone on the journey of life together, and youthful ones who are still enjoying that pleasant period ere the glowing brightness of the honeymoon has faded down to the light of common day, all come there to be healed of their infirmities, and a few besides for amusement only. For it is a gay little place, where they drive dull care away by music and dancing, &c., after the graver duties of the day have been performed, and to those who are well and strong, it is really more than delightful to ride and drive through the lovely forest glades in the daytime, and glide over the moonlit waters of the fairy lake at night.

The mineral waters at Pierrefonds are said to resemble those of Eaux Bonnes in almost every particular, and the diseases in which they are most efficacious are, affections of the chest, throat, and voice, skin diseases, rheumatism, neuralgia, and general debility, while the routine to be observed by invalids is as follows:—in the morning they drink the waters, in the forenoon they inhale and bathe in them, in the afternoon they walk or drive through the forest and in the evening they dance. Of course *all* the invalids are not able to join the dancers, but many of them are, and those who are incapacitated from partaking of the pleasure appear to derive abundant amusement from looking on at the others. French dance music is decidedly pretty as a rule, though naturally somewhat commonplace in character, like the people by whom and for whom it is composed. But indeed with music of a very high order, such, for instance as Wagner's, French people of the present day seem to have little or no sympathy. On the contrary they find much fault with it, objecting that it is so very scientific as to infringe on mathematics, and that he has thus turned into a science that which is merely an art, and on one occasion a lady said in my hearing, "What I blame him (Wagner) most for is, that he makes you wish to go to sleep, and at the same time prevents you

from gratifying the inclination," which was a very severe, though perhaps not altogether unmerited, criticism on the combined tunelessness and noise of some of the later compositions of this great master. And who but a French person could have turned it into so neat an epigram? The old church or priory stands to the right of the Hotel des Bains and is worthy of a visit because, strange to say, the crypt contains a fountain of bright clear water flowing from a rock close by, from which Pierrefonds (*petra fons*) is said to have got its fame. The steeple of this ancient edifice was added to it in 1552, but I was unable to ascertain when the building itself was erected; and though the exterior wears a very venerable and time-stained aspect, within it suggests the idea of a whited sepulchre, for they have covered it entirely over with a coat of white-wash which effectually conceals all the relics and records of a dead past which must lie hidden beneath it.

The village clusters affectionately round this old pile; but the castle of Pierrefonds, which is built on a height, dominates the whole scene, and from its commanding position seems to look proudly down and around as though it were conscious of being, as it actually is, the finest specimen of feudal architecture in France. It certainly is a most superb building—an irregular quadrilateral in shape, each front having three large battlemented towers—and, in consequence of its elevated site, it looks imposing from every point of view, but you must approach and enter it to obtain a just idea of its vastness, for it covers nearly seven thousand square yards of surface, and the rooms—or more properly speaking—the halls, are enormous, with huge fireplaces which have all been perfectly restored with oak fittings and carvings, &c. One of these halls which they call the *salle d'armes* is more than fifty-five yards long, another on a lower story is large enough to contain five hundred men, and it has been calculated that in case of a seige more than a thousand men could be garrisoned in the castle for several months. But the most curious and suggestive apartment in the building is the chief sleeping room, because there you see a relic of barbarous times in the shape of a tall wooden screen which was used in former days for the purpose of keeping off the prying eyes of the soldiers on guard, from the occupants of the bed whom they were guarding.

This castle was built by Louis d'Orleans, brother of Charles VI, in the early part of the 15th century, and on the site of a still older structure, some remains of which still exist. In 855 Charles the Bald had a residence near Pierrefonds, and this residence having been destroyed, a new one was erected, it is supposed, on the same spot as that now occupied by the chateau which at the present time is the admiration of all beholders. Pierrefonds is thus a very ancient place, but in 1215 Philip Augustus gave over a great portion of the building to the Monks of Saint Sulpices, whose successors probably suffered it to fall into ruins, as from that period until the latter part of the 14th century, no mention is made of it in history. In 1390 however, Louis d'Orleans, who was the most magnificent Prince of his time, and the grandest seigneur in the luxurious court of Charles VI, commenced the construction of the present edifice, which in 1420 was taken by the English, and in 1595 was sold by the Neapolitan troops of De Sauveulx, Canon of the Abbey of Soissons, who had been master of it for some time previously, to Henry IV for 18,000 ducats. In 1616 the troupes of Louis XIII, under the Comte d'Angoulême, having beseiged the castle with but partial success, the Marquis de Cœuvre, the then Capitaine de Pierrefonds, capitulated. After some time the king came to the conclusion that it was necessary for the peace and tranquility of his subjects that this impregnable fortress, which so often changed hands and seemed to be such a constant bone of contention, should fall ; so in the following year it was demolished by his orders. It then remained in ruins until our own times, but soon after Napoleon III came to the throne he entrusted its restoration to M. Viollet-le-duc, who executed his task with so much skill and ability that it is now complete in almost every detail, and presents precisely the same appearance that it did in former days.

The feat thus accomplished by what may we termed comparative architecture, bears some resemblance to that of Cuvier, who by comparative anatomy was enabled to construct from a single bone the entire skeleton of an animal he had never seen. But in the case of the chateau the skeleton was there and some towers were still standing ; so to a clever architect like Viollet-le-duc it was not so difficult after all to cause it thus to spring up phoenix-like from its own ashes.

The rides and drives about Pierrefonds are legion. Indeed one might spend a month there without exhausting all the excursions in the neighbourhood. In the first place the Cateau d'Offémont is within an easy distance. It was here that the famous, or rather infamous, Marquise de Brinvilliers resided, and here she had that wonderful laboratory in which it is supposed she distilled the poisons which she afterwards administered with such fatal effect to her father and brothers, &c. We are told that the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty ; but *she* planned her evil deeds in the midst of a scene so fair and smiling that it is difficult to associate it with the idea of guilt, for the Chateau d'Offémont stands on one side of the classic river Aisne and in the middle of a noble park where all is light, and brightness, and beauty.

Many charming roads and avenues have been cut through the forest, but the pleasantest drive is the Route d'Eugenie, because it takes you past several lakes where you see pleasure boats and summer houses by the water side which were all in requisition in the merry days gone by, when the Emperor used sometimes to have as many as a hundred guests at a time with him at his Palace at Compiègne, and when the now too silent forest used to ring with the laughter of sporting and pleasure parties of all kinds.

From Beaumont, the avenue which is used as a practice ground for the soldiers—the movable butts being placed there—a very fine view is to be obtained, as you look right over the tops of the trees in all directions for miles round, and at the end of a long green vista you see the white Palace of Compiègne gleaming before you. But perhaps the prettiest spot in the whole forest is the *Trou Fondu*, which, notwithstanding, its unflattering appellation, is a dreamy, delicious little dell, all greenness and shade, where one could fancy Boccaccio would have liked to woo, and Watteau to paint, and so secluded and sequestered that not even the faintest sound from the outer world ever seems to reach it. Nevertheless, in summer time, its slumbering echoes are often awakened by sounds of mirth and merriment, as pic-nic parties innumerable make it the scene of their rendezvous during the season.

There are in this neighbourhood the remains of no fewer than twenty Roman buildings, all more or less interesting. The first to be mentioned is Saint Pierre en Chastres, an old priory which since the revolution had been transformed into a farm of considerable size. But one day when going over the place, M. Viollet-le-duc came to the conclusion that it must have been there that Cæsar had encamped and prepared for the battle in which, according to the commentaries, the blood of the killed and wounded had flowed down to the river Aisne. So without any delay a staff of workmen were employed and set to the task of excavation, which was attended with the most complete success, for the camp was not only found, but has been so well restored that people now come from afar to see this wonderful encampment which had played so important a role in the annals of the conquest of the Gauls. The Roman arms and utensils of various kinds which were found there have been deposited in the museum of Compiègne.

About an hour from Pierrefonds there is another military station of the Romans called Champlieu which was, so to speak, disinterred by the late Emperor's orders. These ruins are classed amongst the most interesting discoveries of modern times, and certainly there are grounds for their being so, as in addition to other things you see there the remains of a temple of Apollo, a theatre, and baths. It was at first thought that there must have been a city close at hand to account for the existence of these monuments of an advanced state of civilization ; but up to the present they have not found anything of the kind, and probably never will, for the fact that the Romans, as we know, considered baths, a temple, and a theatre as almost necessities of daily life during a long sojourn in the country, explains all.

Mont Berni is a place which also well repays the trouble of a visit and is what they call a Gallo-Roman village. When excavating it the first building they came to was a bathing establishment ; but a great many houses were found there with their cellars and first stories in tolerable preservation, and in the centre of the village there is a graveyard which has been carefully explored. About a hundred and fifty tombs have been opened, but nothing in the graves or the articles

found near the skeletons bore the slightest traces to anything pertaining to christianity.

Another village which deserves notice is Saint Jean aux Bois. It was formerly a convent of such note that the Superior was always a Princess of the blood royal, and in the cemetery there is still a very well preserved tomb of a *White Queen*, that is to say a widow, the mourning of the Queens of France being white. Some remains of its ancient fortifications still exist about the enclosure of the convent, and the church, which is regarded as a curious historical monument and which was built in the 11th century, is so large that it could hold three times as many people as the whole village contains.

The famous oak which everybody goes to see and which is named *Le Gros Chêne*, because it is the largest in France, is quite close to Saint Jean aux Bois, and so is Saint Perine, the place where the Imperial stag-hunts used generally to end, the pool there often receiving the stag at bay.

The valley which contains the *Chalet de l'Imperatrice* is also within a short walk of the Hotel des Bains. It is entirely surrounded by wooded hills, and has no less than three lakes, on the banks of one of which stands the pretty little chalet which was built for a resting place for the Empress on hunting days, or whenever she made any long excursions into the forest.

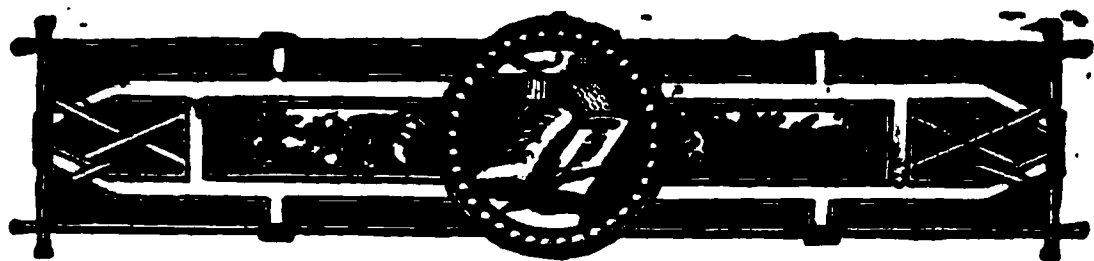
Lastly there is the *trou coquillier*, which is the bed of all the fossil shells left by the sea in the forest of Compiègne; and though it has already furnished every museum in the world with specimens, the supply not only appears to be quite inexhaustible, but like the Tarephathan barrel of meal, never even seems to diminish.

Of course there are many other places to be described if space permitted, but enough may have been said to prove that Pierrefonds only needs to be seen and known to be appreciated; as in addition to being pretty and pleasant itself, the surrounding scene is so fair and so diversified in character that it must possess charms for almost every taste. For there you have the twilight gloom of the noble forest, the sunny brightness of the smiling valley, the bold, waving upland, the romantic glen with patches of heather scattered here and there, which look like bouquets gathered in a colder clime, and seem to

convey a pleasant message from home, the peaceful homestead with its orchard and gardens reminding you of England, the sparkling river and the still lake, with over all a blue unclouded sky and a climate which not only gives a sort of perpetual brightness to the landscape, but imparts to it that depth and richness of colouring which harmonises so perfectly with the grace and beauty of its outline.

The Easterns say that we Saxons inherit the wandering foot as a curse. But surely it should be regarded rather as a good than as an evil ! For to those who go about the world with a seeing eye and a hearing ear, and who have a keen and just appreciation of all that is most curious and beautiful in nature, life, and art, travel not only furnishes a continual feast of enjoyment while it lasts, but it is in many cases a joy for ever. As after a while one's memory becomes lined with fair and pleasant pictures which always can be seen at will, and whose colours often glow in unfading beauty to one's life's end. Besides it is to this migratory instinct that we owe many a delightful discovery. As a case in point, if no English traveller had deviated from the beaten track last Autumn, the praises of Pierrefonds would still have remained unsung, that is to say, except in the French language. And as numbers of people who would fain go abroad each year to drink the waters, are deterred from doing so by the long and expensive journey which a visit to any of the celebrated baths and wells would entail, a place like the one just described, within such an easy distance of London, and the journey to which is proportionately inexpensive, has long been a desideratum.





“FAIN WOULD I CLIMB BUT THAT I FEAR TO FALL.”

QUEEN Elizabeth had reigned over England twenty years when the name of Walter Raleigh was added to the lengthy list of her courtiers. His earlier days were spent in a rural parish on the coast of Devonshire. Had he been the eldest of the family he might have spent his days as a country squire, but as he was a younger son it was needful to bestir himself in order to secure a respectable position in society. After finishing his education at Oriel College, Oxford, he set off for the wars. He fought in France on behalf of the Huguenots, and subsequently in the Netherlands as a volunteer under the Prince of Orange. He had been to America as a colonist, and had contended with rebels in Ireland. At length he was fortunate enough to attract the favourable attention of his Sovereign, and by graceful and well-timed flattery he made the most of his opportunity.

An accidental circumstance, together with his graceful appearance and ready adulation had secured for him a footing at Court. Yet he was greatly perplexed. His mind was ardent, aspiring, and hopeful, he was therefore disposed to enter the race, where wealth and honour awaited the successful competitor.

Prudential reasons, however, were not wanting to suggest that it would be wiser to select some humbler and safer path. He had neither friends, nor property, nor influence, equal to those possessed by many around him, and the latest pages of English history furnished many admonitory lessons concerning the results of ill-advised ambition.

During those long protracted wars of the Roses, men who had hoped to secure a place among the peerage of England had been compelled to fly into foreign lands or had perished on the scaffold. He knew also that since the elevation of the Tudors to the throne painful reverses of fortune had been ex-

perienced by many. And those who appeared to be just on the very verge of attaining to the utmost height of their ambition had suddenly been plunged into a vortex of wretchedness and misery. The tragic story of Lady Jane Grey's short though melancholy usurpation was then of recent date, and the immediate kinsfolk and descendants of the originators of that plot were still living. Who can wonder then that the late adventurer at Court was harassed by a multitude of conflicting thoughts.

In this state of mind he sauntered solitarily in the crowded apartments of the royal palace. To one of the deep recesses which adjoined the windows of that spacious hall Raleigh retired, in order that his reverie might be undisturbed by the remarks of the triflers around. Standing near to the window, and thinking himself unobserved, he traced on the glass with his diamond ring the words which form the subject of this essay. "Fain would I climb but that I fear to fall." But it so happened that the Queen had watched the young man whilst engaged in this writing, and her curiosity was awakened. When the noisy courtiers had left the hall, she went to the place and immediately added another line, "If thy heart fail thee do not climb at all," thus forming a couplet, and furnishing a little sage advice for the ambitious though hesitating young man.

It concerns us not to narrate how, encouraged by his royal mistress, he climbed to an almost incredible height of favour and destruction, or to compose a funeral requiem o'er the ashes of his former greatness. Suffice it to say, that when he had almost reached the topmost step of that ladder which he had so speedily ascended, he was hurled bruised and bleeding to the ground; and the last scene was closed by an old man in his sixty-sixth year laying down his hoary head on the block, a fearful example of the fall which invariably overtakes those who soar too high.

Most persons, whether their ambition is worthy or unworthy, desire to rise a little higher than the position they now occupy.

Success only causes new aspirations. Having attained the summit of the hill, far from perceiving that their journey is completed, they have only commanded a wider prospect be-

yond. And there are some who feel within themselves the talents which must render their exaltation eminently useful, to mankind, and who wish for power only that there may be more virtue and more happiness in the world than if they had not been elevated. But of the multitudes of the ambitious how few are there of this noble class? How infinitely more numerous they who seek in power only what the virtuous man does not wish so much, as consent to bear in it, for the greater good which may attend it!

How many are there who, spurning the humble vale of content, would scale the proud summits of affluence and renown; and blinded by an ambition which they are totally unable to check would forget the princely donor, while enjoying the munificent gifts which he is incessantly lavishing on them.

"Lowliness is young ambition's ladder,
Whereto the climber upward turns his face;
But when he once attains the upmost round,
He then unto the ladder turns his back;
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
By which he did ascend."

History is teeming with instances of vaulting ambition and its dire results.

Look at Alexander the Great, as he gains victory after victory, until his very name strikes terror in the hearts of his vanquished foes! Behold the man who actually wept because he had no more worlds to conquer, no more food on which to nourish his ravenous ambition! Behold that hero of ten thousand fights, that very personification of bravery, as he falls a prey to his own evil passions, literally hugging the chains of debauchery and intemperance, as they tighten their grasp round his prostrate frame!

And can we reflect on the career of the great Cæsar without giving him a place in the melancholy number of those who illustrate the evils of insatiable ambition?

It is indeed sad to think that perhaps the greatest man this earth has ever produced was barbarously murdered by those whom he had ever treated with the utmost indulgence. But such is the case! And the end of a man unequalled for the splendid success which invariably attended his most ambitious schemes, and the brilliant military talent and unerring

political skill, which were united in his person, was assassinated by the fell hand of a despicable ingrate!

But Napoleon equalled if he did not excel, both these men in the height of his ambition and his ultimate fall.

The fearless bravery and undaunted courage that dwelt in the breast of that insignificant officer, soon obtained for him the command of one of the finest armies in Europe.

Watch with what strides he ascends ambition's ladder! He is successively proclaimed first Consul, and Emperor of the French, and already burdened with the laurels of many a bloody field, he aspires to conquer the world!

But his designs were to be frustrated and his plans brought to nought, for on the 18th of June, 1815, the power of Napoleon Bonaparte was laid low, and he was sentenced to drag out the remaining years of his life in weary exile, amid the rejoicings of an emancipated nation, and the reproaches of his accusing conscience. Thus Napoleon had no spur to prick the sides of his intent, but only vaulting ambition which in his case veritably o'erleaped itself and fell on the other side."

"Ambition," says Lord Bacon, "is like choler which is a humour that maketh a man active, earnest, full of alacrity, and stirring, but when elated by the partial accomplishment of his aspirations he would climb still higher, he forgets that eagle-pinioned dangers soar around each cliffy hold to which he would so eagerly hasten; he is unmindful of the evils that lurk in fiendish expectation only awaiting his advent to hurl him from the rocky eminence which he has ascended."

"Go teach the eagle, when in azure heaven,
He upward darts to seize his madden'd prey,
Striving through the death-circle of its fear.
To pause, and let it 'scape, and thou may'st win
Man to forego the sparkling round of power
When it floats airily within his grasp."

We should not climb where the risk is great. Labour should be preferred to peril. Ever since Britain became a commercial nation there have been many ruined by the attempt to become wealthy all at once; and there are doubtless thousands in our land at the present time, who would have been in possession of all needful comforts, had it not been for imprudent and unsuccessful speculation.

They or their fathers desired to acquire wealth more rapidly

than could be done by mere industry, skill, and carefulness. The result was that whatever had been gathered whilst they toiled in safer paths, was scattered and lost.

Seek not then to ascend the heights around which may be seen the wrecks of myriads.

Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived, asserts "that every purpose is established by counsel," and such is the case; for no matter what position a man may be in his prudence or recklessness decides whether he is to be an ornament or a disgrace to society. And men who might have made their names honoured and their memories revered have gone down to their graves covered with the reproaches and accusations of their fellows on account of their difficiency in this particular. The youth who rushes recklessly into life's battle, making no defence against the dangers and temptations which are certain to beset him will live to curse the day when in his eagerness to fight he forgot to arm himself for the contest; while on the other hand he, who, by unceasing toil and assiduous perseverance, clothes himself with the breastplate of prudence and the helmet of hope can withstand alike the assaults of men and devils, and, surmounting all the difficulties and hindrances with which he comes in contact, will live to enjoy that admiration and esteem which the world is ever ready to bestow on those deserving it.

Who will employ a physician who, notwithstanding his unquestionable skill and renowned learning, is devoid of the prudence requisite for the successful performance of his profession? Look at that man of business as he stands halting between two opinions uncertain whether to invest in a speculation which will either place at his command unbounded wealth or plunge him into the depths of poverty and disgrace; and just at the moment when dazzling the merchant with the brilliant future which possibly may be his, avarice is about to win the battle, prudence interposes, and by placing its dread forebodings of penury and indigence before his affrighted eyes, bears off the victor's palm. The wisest princes think it no diminution to their greatness or derogation to their sufficiency to rely upon counsel. And if the desire of glory in the heart of a prince quenches the prudence by which he should be actuated, if, forgetting that he is the protector of the public

tranquillity, he prefers his own false glory to the love and happiness of his people; if he had rather conquer provinces than reign over hearts, and think it more illustrious to be the destroyer of every neighbouring nation than the father of that which is confided to his care; if the lamentation of his subject be the only song of triumph that accompanies his victories, what a scourge has God in his wrath given to man, in giving him such a master!

Some madmen will perhaps sing of his victories, but the provinces, the cities, the villages, will weep over them.

Superb monuments may be erected to immortalize his conquests, but the ashes still smoking of cities that once were flourishing, the wild desolation of fields stripped of their fertility and beauty; the ruins of walls under which faithful citizens be buried; so many public marks of calamities that are to subsist after him, will be sad monuments which are to immortalize his folly and vanity.

There are too many who are not content with climbing up the hill side with their natural feet, they aspire to reach the top by balloons. And it is only when they feel the balloon wildly rushing down, and themselves in the most imminent danger that they see the folly of their pride.

So it is with those merchants who by investing in the balloon of speculation are suddenly hurled from the heights of affluence, to the lowest depths of poverty.

If we would make our success certain, we must not venture in balloons; the ascent would be very easy, but not sufficiently well directed. We must content ourselves with something more like hard up-hill climbing.

There are many who fail to begin life's journey, because they are waiting for talents to be developed in them which have not yet made their appearance. But this is foolish policy; for some have to wait all their lives without their appearing.

Demosthenes is justly regarded as the greatest of all Grecian orators, but where would he have been if he had acted on this principle.

In the prime of his life he could soar where none could follow, and did more by the persuasive eloquence of his lips to frustrate the ambitious schemes of Philip of Macedon, than any warrior of Sparta or Athens.

When a lad, not only was his education neglected, and his property embezzled, but nature seemed to have totally unfitted him to take any active part in the tumultuous affairs of his country. He had a weak constitution, a feeble voice, indistinct articulation, and shortness of breath. But fired with ambition to become an orator by hearing Callistratus plead, the young man, not content with mere dreams of future distinction, and undeveloped powers, began to climb. And what was the result? Overcoming by his indomitable perseverance the almost insurmountable obstacles which nature and circumstances had united to put in his way, he at length emerged the possessor of the most marvellous eloquence, that human tongue had ever uttered. Blunders of various kinds are imaginable, but any of these if continued would render our enterprise abortive, and perhaps fatal.

But though the prudence, and circumspection, which we have been recommending, are worthy to be ranked among the highest qualifications that man can possess, there is a danger of them being carried too far; and if this takes place, there arises a craven fear, despicable alike in the sight of heaven and earth.

And this overmuch prudence throws hindrances in the way of the noblest actions, and thus in a great measure increases the already overflowing cup of the world's misery.

As if by magic, it transforms fearless warriors into trembling cowards; munificent benefactors into griping misers, and hinders the performance of deeds of heroism, and acts of kindness which might have brought glory and honour on the heads of those from whom they emanated; thus, not only wresting from deserving men the good name which they might otherwise have possessed, but robbing the world in general of the lustre which such accomplishments would assuredly have added to the Chronicle of those golden deeds, which ever and anon light up the dark page of its history.

Who can estimate the number of men, who need but confidence to enable them to rise to that position in society, which they are so well calculated to adorn but who are restrained by the chains of a slavish fear, before which all other considerations melt like snow before the summer sun?

Deeds of valour, which many a hero was burning to perform,

and which would have secured for him his country's applause, and that self satisfaction which is always the result of right-doing, have been nipped in the very bud and left to perish unborn on account of the failure which it was possible might ensue.

Books of wisdom, which would have commanded the respect and admiration of every one who read them, have been left to waste their sweetness on the desert air of obscurity and seclusion, on account of the dread of a cold reception which haunts the mind of their composer.

If this fear had prevailed in all cases, where would those great men be who by their dauntless heroism, their irresistible eloquence, or their almost unsearchable wisdom have gained for themselves well-merited praise and renown?

Who could fill up the place of a Mozart astounding the world by the mellifluous harmony which ever flowed from his pen?

Where could our Milton be found entrancing his fellows by the inimitable grace and majestic grandeur of his poetry?

How could we spare the names of Stephenson or Davy from the list of our profound thinkers?

If this fear always prevailed the whole fabric of society would instantly be destroyed, for no one is completely certain of success in his calling, and that fact would prevent men from entering into any business or profession.

“In politics what begins in fear usually ends in folly; in morals what begins in fear usually ends in wickedness; in religion what begins in fear usually ends in fanaticism.” What has kept men down has been the indulgence of fear and delay, until they were not able to shake the iron chains which encompassed them, and gradually sunk into a state of inactivity and indolence.

Unless a man has stultified his nature and quenched the spirit of immortality which is his portion, it is not for him to rest in absolute contentment. He is born to hopes and aspirations, as the sparks fly upwards. And surely examples are not wanting of successful climbing, and ultimate success.

On the 9th of January, 1806, the English nation was endeavouring to do honour to the remains of the great naval hero, Nelson. A nation's wail was uttered as the brave man's body

was conveyed to its resting place in St. Paul's Cathedral. Nelson had died in the defence of his country. He had been successful in his endeavours to establish the naval supremacy of Britain, and thus to render its homes and sanctuaries secure amid the fierce and long contested war which had been ravaging Europe; had he been hindered by fear, had he hesitated in his duty in one single instance, the consequences might, ay! would, have proved disastrous in the extreme, not only to England, but to the whole of Europe.

It is by perseverance we rise, and it is through perseverance alone that we can hope for success.

It is by this one thing that the quarry becomes a pyramid, and that distant countries are united by canals. If a man were to compare the effect of a single stroke of a pickaxe, or one impression of a spade, with the general design and last result, he would be overwhelmed by the sense of their disproportion.

Yet those petty operations, incessantly continued, in time surmount the greatest difficulties, and mountains are levelled, oceans are bounded, by the slender hand of human beings.

The mighty pyramids of stone,
That wedge-like cleave the desert airs,
When nearer seen, and better known,
Are but gigantic flights of stairs.

The distant mountains that uprear
Their solid bastions to the skies,
Are tossed by pathways that appear,
As we to higher levels rise.

The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night.



HUBERT MAITLAND'S WRAITH.

A NOVEL.

By FELIX HOLLAND.

CHAPTER XIII.

ONE MORE UNFORTUNATE.—(*Continued.*)

"No, sister," Philip said; "I too am miserable, but we will not die yet. We are too young—and I fear neither of us quite fit for heaven till we have suffered a little longer. Come, sister."

"Why do you mock me with that name?" she asked. "I have no brother, and I know too well what other peoples' brothers are to desire one."

"Your experiences cannot have been fortunate," said Philip, pained at the stubborn mistrustfulness. "Look in my face and tell me if there is anything there to make you doubt me, when I tell you I desire nothing but your good."

The beautiful dark eyes turned on him with such a keen intense light that, all guiltless as he was, he winced and looked down.

When the next instant he met her eyes again their fierce light had faded all away, and they were beaming on him in all the tenderness and pity of purest womanhood, so sweetly and lovingly did they beam on him through their gathering tears that Philip could hardly restrain his own. A minute they walked on in silence, then Philip said,

"You invited me to a very cold home to-night. Did you intend me to understand you had no other?"

His companion looked sorrowfully up into his sympathetic face, and nodded assent.

"And I," said Philip, "have no home, but I have money. Take it, and promise me not to go near the river again to-night, all life is sacred—even yours and mine, sister. There is always someone in the world we may make happy by our lives and sorry by our deaths. Let us live for others, then, most when life is no longer precious to ourselves."

"But I have no one to live for," she sighed.

"Then," said Philip softly, "live for me. Pray take my purse, there is not much in it, you can repay me when we next meet, for we shall meet again. The world is a very little place after all—there is not room enough in it for anyone to be lost."

Philip smiled sadly as he spoke, and his strange companion faintly returned it.

"Thank you very much," she said, "for your generosity, more for your kindness. If all men were like you, there would be no women like me. No, I will not take your money. I have a little, and could have more than I want for the asking; but it will buy me neither love nor home. Good bye. I would say God bless you, but He would do nothing at my request."

She spoke so sadly, she looked into his eyes so kindly, and her own were so bright and beautiful as she smiled on him through her tears, and her trembling lips were so pure and childlike, that Philip felt he would have liked to kiss them. He pressed her hand very tenderly.

"Good-bye, sister, *au revoir*," he added to himself.

"*Au revoir*," she echoed; and Philip was again alone in the street with his own sad "hunger in his heart."

He was yet gazing regretfully after the dim retreating figure, when he was startled by the clatter of wheels and that peculiar savage whoop by which London drivers announce a runaway horse to the endangered public; and before he had time to think he was lying stunned and bleeding on the ground. So swiftly had the vehicle rounded the corner, so sudden was the accident, that when Philip's senses

returned he was quite unable to understand what had occurred. He found himself lying in a chemist's shop surrounded by strange faces. Two persons were kneeling over him, one seemed a doctor and was holding his hand, the other, a girl, was bathing his forehead with something that looked like blood and water.

"Where do you live?" asked the latter, as soon as he opened his eyes—it was the voice of his late companion. But before he could fairly smile at her welcome face, or comprehend the question, the place swam round; the faces swam round, grew indistinct and vanished, and Philip re-entered the dark borderland that lies betwixt sleep and death.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCERNING MR. MOSS AND HIS AFFAIRS.

INDEPENDENT of the property he was anxiously expecting to inherit from his father, Emily Aldair's lover, Mr. Abraham Moss, was already a thriving small capitalist on his own account. The fortunate means by which he had acquired his present possessions were still in full operation, and proving very fertile in the augmentation of them.

Every fortune that ever was made in business was the result of energetic action on a predetermined plan. Given a man with a plan, and industry, and his fortune is made from the hour he pulls down his shutters, or nails his brass plate on the door.

Mr. Moss's plan was as follows. He set himself resolutely to acquire the leases of certain houses in certain unobtrusive streets abutting on main thoroughfares; and, if possible, in proximity to some large music hall or dancing saloon. These were all houses that, owing to their position, and the negligence of their owners, had fallen into the hands of the vile harpies who prey upon the victims of vice. These wretches

invariably earned eventually a reputation sufficiently nefarious to frighten away their respectable neighbours, and soon there was a whole street to let for next to nothing to a respectable man. Here was an opportunity for the promising young speculator, Mr. Abraham Moss, Jun.

Instead of being deterred by the bad reputation of the locality, like a brave man, and a true genius of capital, and perhaps, for so whispered the approving world, not without an eye to his duty as a citizen of this degraded metropolis, he resolved to secure the leases of the whole lot of these desirable and inexpensive residences, with a view to the under-letting the same at a sufficient percentage to cover the risk.

One could not purge such a desperate place in a day. Of course, some of the houses fell again into disreputable hands, who could prevent that? But Mr. Moss, or rather his agent, for he was much too respectable a man to meddle with the details of house property, had a system with these, as with the old eyesores, who, by the way, still held their leases; instead of instituting expensive and uncertain proceedings of law in order to expel them, Mr. Moss's agent was instructed simply to double their rents, and by this means he hoped eventually to obtain his righteous ends.

It is a curious fact and one well worthy the observation of the clergy and moralists in general, what a tenacity vice has to certain localities. All the legislation of England, all the preaching and praying of the Church of England, unless, perhaps, Her Majesty were to insert a special petition in the Church service, could not make the Haymarket or Ratcliff virtuous, any more than all the French novels, all the fleshy poems, that ever were published could make Belgravia immodest. Mr. Moss's experiences, as the Dean of Clapham, a pious clergyman and a great friend of the Aldair's and Moss's once observed, proved a most remarkable exemplification of this singular ethnological fact. Notwithstanding city missionaries and tract distributors had now free ingress to all these houses; and, moreover, had their interests and persons protected by special policemen; although Mr. Moss's agent raised their rents 20, 30, 50, 100 per cent., and distrained punctually at three weeks after quarter-day, in

spite of everything, vice holds its own against virtue, and Panderers-place, and Wildoats-street, were still known as the most infamous dens in the metropolis. More than this, Mr. Moss had extended his zeal further, and contrived to discover and buy scores of houses of a less notorious character in every conceivable and inconceivable part of the town, to all of which he applied his purgative panacea of rent-raising with a like satisfactory result. His agent found the proprietors of these latter even more tenacious, as they were better able to wring the additional rent money out of the higher grade of unfortunate beings who supported them. Thus Mr. Moss found, as many have done before him, that virtue brings its own reward and the path of duty led, if not to glory, at least to reputation and wealth, which are perhaps after all quite as good, and much more useful to society.

It was to one of these latter class of residences that the rising young capitalist now bent his steps. It was a large corner house of a crescent that had once been the abode of fashion and repute, and still contrived to make a tolerable show of respectability and declining dignity. It was a very dark house with very dark windows, and dark untraceable shadows that wrapped its sooty brickwork in perpetual gloom. It was a very lonely house; nobody seemed to live in it, nobody passed it, nobody was seen going to it, no body was coming from it, there was no light, no life, no sound, except the whining and moaning of the wind as it rushed round it, and over it, and past it, and against it, hooting, and hissing, at its dark, dark windows. Mr. Moss knocked lightly at the door, yet it startled the whole neighbourhood, so lonely and still was all. A dark, squat, greasy Irishwoman came out into the area in answer to his summons, shading a guttering candle by her hand, the better to see her visitor.

"What d'yer want? More doctors', I warrant," she croaked, in a voice that suggested a raven with a cold in his head.

"Are you Mrs. Ogle?"

"Well, wot if I am?" croaked grimy face, then catching sight of the jewels flashing on Mr. Moss's dainty hand, she suddenly vanished in the kitchen, and in a minute re-appeared at the street door with a smile and curtsey, quite wonderful to see in a woman of so grim a visage.

"I wish to see a young woman who lodges here—name of Pearl."

"There's no sich name as I'm awares of."

"Then Turner" suggested Mr. Moss.

"Oh yes," replied grimy face, "there is a Miss Turner, and she is at home, by token she is likely to be, seein' she came here bringin' wid her a poor kilt critur as she says is her brother, not that I'm green enough to take it in, but here he bides as unconscious as a idiot babe, and she workin' herself to the bone nussin' him, and can't be persuaded to send him to the hospital, though may be she is ruining the house if onybody should suspec' it's a fever, which I assure you sir, it is nothing ketchin.' Och! but I would never have taken 'em in, but things is bad, and rents is high."

"Oho! what's in the wind now?" whistled Mr. Moss.

"If yer will give me yer card, sir, I will take it up to her, but you must know, sir, this is so respectable a house that I can't promise she will see yer, for the young ladies, dear heart, have to be very careful not to give the 'ouse a bad name."

"Hold your d—d tongue, and show me the room," growled Mr. Moss, grinding his teeth, and regarding this voluble portress with anything but an amiable expression.

"Wot! d'yer mean to insult a lady in her own 'ouse," shrieked grimy face, "If Ogle were alive he'd give it yer."

Mr. Moss put out his hand, as if to stop the torrent of vile execrations that his incivility had provoked, but, observing the dirty condition of Mrs. Ogle's face, he altered his mind and simply whispered,

"I am Mr. Moss, your landlord."

"I'm sure I beg yer pardon, sir," whimpered the terrified Mrs. Ogle.

"Hold your tongue, which is Miss Turner's room, I say?"

"Top back," gasped the lady of the house.

Without waiting for more, Mr. Moss sprang up the stairs. He knocked gently at the door; as no one answered, he noiselessly opened it and entered. A dim light was burning near the bed, on which lay a dark complexioned young man with a white bandage round his head. And by his side with one hand resting lightly on his breast, lay the beautiful girl whose face was the last that imaged itself on Philip's dizzy brain. She

was neatly dressed, but her garments wore the crumpled unfitting look of clothes that had not been removed for days. Her hair, such masses of dark, soft, wavy hair, fell in tangled confusion over her delicate features, and lay coiling on her gently heaving bosom. She had evidently thrown herself on the bed and fallen asleep from sheer weariness. Mr. Moss gazed long and gloatingly at the fair sleeper; then, with a sigh, he turned his attention to her patient. He lifted the counterpane to obtain a better view of the face, then his own became white as that of Emily Aldair's lost lover. His deep muttered oath disturbed the fair sleeper and she sprang to her feet wide awake in a moment."

"How dare you come here!" she cried, with a fearless scorn that might have daunted a man less confident of his advantage.

"I dare do anything for you, Pearl," he whined.

"Do not nickname me sir, call me Bessie Turner, or, rather, do not call me anything, but go,"

"And do you suppose, Miss Turner," returned Mr. Moss collectedly, "though I am not so sure that it is not a nickname too—can you suppose that I shall be so soft as to lose you again after moving heaven and earth to find you? No, my peerless beauty, my pearl of pearls. I have found you, and I mean to receive the same kindness at your hands as many more fortunate, but no better men have enjoyed. You are in my power at last. But submit with a good grace, my pearl, give me a kiss and let us be friends."

He moved a step nearer to her as he spoke—she sprang quickly back, and drew herself up so proudly that he seemed to shrink and cower before her. Weak woman as she was, few men would have dared to lay hands on her now—certainly not Abraham Moss.

"What would you do?" he asked between his clenched teeth.

"Kill you!"

She spoke very low, but there was that in her voice and in the dark glaring eyes that sent a shiver through his frame. He instinctively recoiled. Her little white hand hung clenched at her side, and behind it he caught sight of a tiny piece of bright steel, glittering, half hid in the dark folds of her skirts. Again he receded a step, as he did so she advanced, pointing

with her finger to the door ; the inexorable little weapon firmly grasped in the still white hand at her side—like the glittering eye of a serpent watching its prey.

Had she faltered, even for a moment, he would have disarmed her. But the great dark eyes never flinched, they fascinated him, they seemed to pour a stream of fire into his brain, he reeled, and trembled before them, but dared not withdraw his gaze. Again she advanced a step and the murderous little dagger flashed and glittered more serpent like than ever as it slowly rose level with her swelling bosom ; another instant, and it might be plunged into his heart. Half mad with horror and thwarted passion, Abraham Moss leaped from the room, and his terrible adversary quickly locked the door in his face.

“Egad,” muttered the baffled lover, “that was a narrow escape. Yet, if you only knew what a trump card I have turned up, you little vixen ! Eh, bein, you will be civil enough the next time I see you.”

CHAPTER XV.

PEARL.

“WHERE am I ! Why is he here ?”

The words spoken in a faint, low voice were sufficient to dispel all Pearl's fury, and fill her beautiful eyes with tenderness and delight. Philip's consciousness had returned ; he was sitting up in bed with a dreamy intelligence kindling in his face. She threw her arms about him in a transport of joy, and laid him gently back.

“Lie down, dear, and do not speak. Never mind him, he is gone now.”

“I know him, and I know you. Do I not ; no I don't.”

“Hush, do not think, do not talk, sleep, and you will be well soon.”

Thus soothed, Philip turned on his pillow, and slept again.

When he next awoke it was morning, and a doctor was feeling his pulse. The danger was over.

From that time he grew better every day. He was soon

able to sit at the window and watch the birds fluttering and chirping on the roofs of the opposite houses, and in the old withered tree that stood in the yard. But his greatest pleasure was to watch sister, for so he insisted on calling her, as she busied about with a thousand little cares and kindnesses, and his greatest grief was when she left him for an hour to go away for an old charwoman who did duty as nurse.

Little he told sister all his history, not even excepting his love for Emily Aldair and the rivalry of Moss. She took wonderful interest in all he related, when he was eloquently eulogizing Mr. Scroggs and the laws of the Crown and Candle she burst into a fit of tears, and cried for an hour as if her heart would

burst. Philip could never induce Sister to talk about herself, and after a fortnight's conversation he knew no more about her than his former companion than before. There were many things that puzzled him, but experience gradually taught him not to ask now in vain to question, as she always seemed to do it, and invariably evaded an answer. He could not understand why the house was so quiet during the day, or the amount of noise at night, and where Sister got the money to pay the very considerable expenses. Her acquaintance with Mr. Moss was another mystery on which Sister maintained most persistent silence. He had seen enough of her in vision at his first awakening to be convinced she was not a phantom, and he was certain he had seen her drive him from the room.

"You are too good, sister," Philip said one day, as his companion came in with a tray, bearing a number of the expensive things with which she was continually surprising him, "I have not half money enough to pay you what I have done for you. My life is much too worthless to recompense your kindness. But it shall be all yours, Sis, you saved it and you are now free of it, and I only wish it were of more value for your sake."

"Don't forget, brother, you paid beforehand. Don't you remember the bridge." And her bright eyes filled with grateful tears as she spoke.

Philip would have been glad to clasp her to his

breast, and kiss them away. But Sis was becoming very shy and undemonstrative, as he grew better.

It was a delightful day when the doctor pronounced him well enough to take a drive in a hansom cab over Hampstead Heath. The sky was so bright, the air was so fresh, the streets so full of life and excitement. And when at last the houses were left behind, what could equal the wonderful prospect over Cricklewood and Finchley and Highgate? Italy, Switzerland and Rhineland had not filled his heart with such an overwhelming wonder of delight. So glad was he that emulating the larks overhead, he burst out singing for very joy. So the swift hours went by, and the gathering twilight drove them home.

Mrs. Ogle stood at the door.

"And so yer back again, like a bad penny," remarked that worthy lady, "and now, young man, that you are well enough to go galivanting about in cabs, let me tell you that I am not a goin' to have this respectable house turned into a hospital for lost and stolen dogs any longer. No, not if yer paid me a pound a day and my beer money. So you'd better go pack to-morrow mornin'. And as for you, Miss, you're a stuck-up-hussy; but I'll let you stop at a extra crown a week, paid beforehand, for I guess you won't be able to pay at all much longer at this game of all play and no work, d'ye hear?"

Pearl ran upstairs without answering, and Philip lingered a minute and followed her.

"Sister," he said, when they were alone,

"What, brother?"

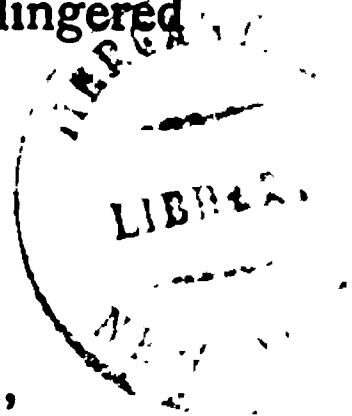
"That woman is right, I must leave you."

"And where will you go?"

"Back to——, no matter, dear Sis; but go I must."

"And I?" cried Pearl, raising her beautiful face with such an imploring look that Philip felt he must clasp her in his arms and kiss her pretty lips into a smile. He contented himself by pressing the little dimpled hand he held. His heart was too full for words.

"Brother, I have something to ask you," said Pearl, trembling with emotion. "You know something of my past life," and she turned her guilty, blushing face away to hide its shame.



"Dearest sister!" cried Philip, blushing too; but his blush was not like hers, for there was no shame in it.

"And I know that you are pure and good," she continued, "so was I, once. I was beautiful, too, and some said clever. Since then, I have known want, hunger, scorn, and misery; have passed from their very dregs to a shameful affluence. I have had the flattery and applause of thousands, and at one and twenty have grown old in what the world called gaiety and pleasure; and I have never had one man to honestly love me since I dishonestly loved. Yes, Philip, I loved one man once, gave my life up to him, and much more than my life, and he did not love me, could not love me in return. No one ever will love me. I had a dog last year, he liked me and he died. Oh brother, I am very miserable, and I wish I were dead!" Tears choked her utterance for several minutes, then she looked up suddenly into Philip's sympathising face and said, "Brother will you try to forgive me and,—and like me just a little, as a real sister."

Philip could restrain himself no longer; he threw his arms wildly round her, and kissed her with all the impulsive passion of his ardent nature.

"Yes, dear sister," he cried, "I will love you, I do love you more than all the brothers in the world. And we will no longer make fools of ourselves crying over sour grapes. Here are sweet grapes, and within our reach. We will live and love for each other's sake, and nothing shall separate us but death."

Trembling with terror Pearl tore herself from his fever-weakened grasp.

"Oh Philip! Brother," for love of God forbear. "You are mad, you are mad," she gasped.

"No Sis," he said, more quietly, "I have been mad, but I am in my senses now. Who can ever know your worth as I know it. We are lonely in the world, and friendless. Society has cast us out, but Heaven has guided us over land and sea to each other's arms that we might be happy at last."

He sprang with out stretched arms towards her, and with a wild cry of joy she sprang to his breast as the tired dove to its home.

A moment she lay there silently panting. Her arms were

twined about his neck, the beautiful face upturned, and the great earnest eyes looked up into his ineffable love and peace. Philip felt the wild beating of her heart, felt the passionate pressure of the soft warm bosom, felt the clinging hands around him, and reeled back giddy with the intoxicating delight, as he kissed again and again the loving face and clasped her tighter to his breast.

"Pearl, my Pearl!" he murmured.

He had never called her so before. The sound of the old name brought back the memory of the old life and shame.

"Oh God!" she cried, "what have I done?" then bursting from Philip's arms again she sprang across the room.

"Stand back!" she cried, "Stand back!"

The tone was so commanding that the bewildered young man remained petrified in his place. The woman who stood before him was so changed that his brain reeled, and he could hardly tell if it were Pearl or another.

All the love and tenderness had left her face, and even the soft womanly grace of her limbs had left her. The delicate childlike lips were compressed and straightened. The arched eyebrows were straightened as if pressed down by the lowering brow. Her beautiful mobile breast might have been a marble bust of Pallas, so still, and strong, and resolute she stood. And there was a fierce fire kindling in her dilated eyes such as Philip remembered to have seen in them a moment when she stood proud and still before the cowering Abraham Moss. What if that fierce light were madness. Might it not even now burst forth like Heaven's thunderbolt, and sweep him from the earth. The thought flashed through Philip's mind, but he could not speak nor move, not even when he saw a murderous little dagger in her hand; he was spell bound, and could only wait what was to come.

She spoke at last, every word separate and distinct, like the tolling of a knell.

"Brother," she said, "you have seen me weak and foolish, but I can be strong," and the little dagger flashed threateningly through the air. "See! I carry this at my bosom, and I could sheath it there with as little concern. I loved you Philip, but not with a love that you can understand, because my beauty is a pestilence, and turns all men's love to poison

and corrupts even pity into passion. But know this ; no man can ever love me and be happy. Oh Philip love me as a sister if you can, but remember I wear this always next my heart, to remind me that, whenever again I feel my fatal beauty leading another to ruin, it will be time to die."

"Sister," said Philip, softly, and at that magic word the passionate girl sank trembling at his feet. The strange and terrible passion was gone, as suddenly as it had come, and the old love and tenderness returned to her face like a flood of sunshine smiling in a rain-dipped rose. She clasped his hand and kissed it again and again.

Philip essayed to raise her, but she remained kneeling and clinging. He placed his fingers caressingly under her chin, lifting her face as one does with a timid child. And indeed it was a child's face now, all purity and love and tears.

"Love me, Brother," she said, "love me always, but leave me."

She spoke in such an appealing tone that Philip dared not disobey.

"Then goodbye, sister," he said, reluctantly. "It is best. I will go. But I shall see you again soon."

"No, not soon," she answered softly, and sadly, "not soon, but some day."

"And I can trust my sister not to——"

"Yes, yes, always ; I have something to live for now. One promise, two, and then goodbye indeed. Promise never to speak of me, never to seek to see me, till I send for you."

"But sister——" pleaded Philip.

"Promise !" ejaculated Pearl, impatiently. So Philip promised, and with one earnest kiss on her broad brow he left her, feeling in his heart a strange foreboding that many troubled days would pass ere he should look upon that loving face again. And as he went his way, there arose within him a strange sense of relief, of thankfulness, for his escape from some dim, overshadowing horror. For his heart was with Emily Aldair, though he had no hope that it would ever beat beside her own again.

CHAPTER XVI.

PHILIP RETURNS TO THE CROWN AND CANDLE.

IT WAS evening, and the exterior of the Crown and Candle had assumed its wonted gloomy appearance owing to the shutters being fastened in all the windows. But within the lamps were lighted, and the comfortable, if unnecessary, fire was burning brightly as one by one the patrons of the house were dropping in ; and the clouds of tobacco smoke were already gathering under the grimy ceiling.

Mr. Blinks, the optician had, enlivened the company with the song "She wore a wreath of roses," and Tod the grocer was clearing his throat in order to meet the call of "Johnny Sands," when Dick Gadaway burst so abruptly into the room that he bruised his nose against the tall back of the settle, and gave the funnybone of his elbow such a crack that Mr. Scroggs thought a soda-water bottle had burst at the bar.

"Here he is," shouted the worthy gardener, "Gentleman, here he is, safe and sound. Hip—hip—hip—hooray."

"Yes, here I am, safe enough, but not so sound," cried Philip, taking the landlord's hand, as all the company rose and clustered round him, making such sounds and gestures of gladness that the convalescent lad was hardly able to bear the noise and pressure.

"Steady, gentlemen, one at a time," cried the excited Dick, "when his right hand is tired shake the left,

And here's a hand my trusty friend,
And gie's a hand o' thine,
We'll tak a right guid willie-waught,
For auld lang syne.

Chorus gentleman,

For auld lang syne, my dear
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne."

Some Scotchmen might have taken exception to Dick's accent, and some critics might object that the song was hardly an appropriate welcome to so recent an acquaintance as

Philip, but no good fellow would have declined to join in that hearty chorus of the lusty old boys as they danced hand in hand around the astonished minstrel.

"Gentlemen," cried Mr. Scroggs, "glasses round at the expense of the house. Damme, this shall be a merry night; now laddie, set thee doon, and tell's all about it."

"It is soon told, sir," said Philip. "I was knocked down by a cab, and lost my senses, but some kind people took care of me, and here I am at your service."

"Damme," cried Mr. Scroggs, "but thou'st white enough and thin enough to ha been to the other worald and back."

"Never mind, give me the fiddle. I have been dying to try my hand this week."

It was a merry night. I am not sure that some of the songs were of the choicest, and I am quite sure that Philip was the only sober one of the company long before it broke up, but when we consider their good intentions, which were simply to show their joy at Philip's escape, and to welcome him back, we shall surely look askance at their weakness, nor listen too attentively to the incoherences they may utter, nor regard too sternly their staggering gait. Who knows but we ourselves may some day grow a little excited over our wine, and talk a little faster than we think, and mistake friend Jones for the waiter and the waiter for friend Jones. And then some envious people might say we were drunk, and we were drivelling. But who would believe it true? Who would care if it were? Not you; nor I.

These men meant to give Philip a merry welcome. Surely it is a good thing to be merry, certainly it is good to welcome the wanderer home, and we will pardon the faultiness of their manners for the honesty of their intentions. Of course somebody will quote the old remark concerning the pavement of a certain much frequented highway, but, with all due deference to that most respectable adage, I for one beg to think that the folks whose good intentions pave the way are by no means the likeliest to frequent it, and if we do not finally meet Mr. Ebenezer Scroggs and most of his friends in a place that is quite inaccessible by any paved road whatever, it will probably be because we are engaged elsewhere.

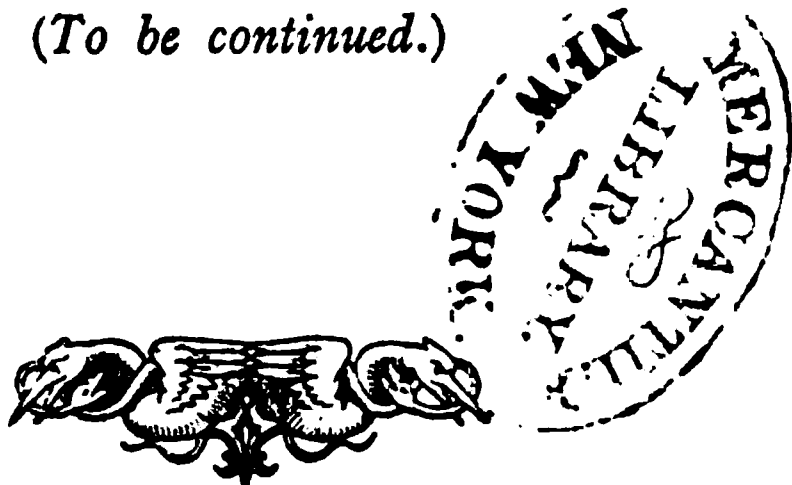
It was one o'clock when Philip, thoroughly tired by his ex-

ertions and excitement, retired to rest. It was a treat to be back once more in the little garret bedroom, nevertheless it had lost something of its old peace and contentment. So long as Philip was in the taproom with the company he did not feel his loss, but once alone in his chamber he missed the beautiful face and kind hands that had soothed his convalescence. He could not desire her presence now. That last night's revelation of the terrible passions latent in her bosom had helped him much to resign her. Still the wonderful eyes, so full of intelligence and love, haunted him in the darkness. Then another face, not so beautiful, not so expressive, but a hundred times dearer, would picture itself in his feverish memory. And she, too, was gone, and would never smile on him again.

He fell asleep at last, and dreamed a long sweet dream of walking in Kensington Gardens with Emily Aldair at his side. He had just come to the end of the walk, and the sun was sinking smilingly over the Palace gables as he bent over his blushing companion, and, oh joy, kissed her pretty pouting lips when Abraham Moss tore her from his side, and Mdle. Barb came smirking by with her blue parasol, then a thunder-clap burst from a suddenly darkened sky, and in the lightning flash that followed, beautiful, terrible Pearl was standing before him with a drawn dagger in her hand.

With a cry that was heard by Mr. Scroggs as he stood below unbarring the shutters, he awoke, and wiped the big drops from his forehead.

(To be continued.)



OUR MODERN POETS.

NO XVI—CHARLES TENNYSON TURNER.

EARLY in 1827 there was printed at Louth, in Lincolnshire, a small volume of poems, containing about one hundred pieces in all, under the title of "Poems by two Brothers." The poets were two school-boys, sons of the rector of Somersby, in the same county, and named respectively Charles and Alfred Tennyson. born in 1808, and he died on the 25th of April of the present Charles, the senior of the two by fully a year, was year, having been vicar of Grasby, in his native county, for nearly half a century. While his younger brother gradually asserted his claim to a foremost place among the poets of his country, taking a bold independent stand with his University prize poem, and in due time worthily holding the position of Laureate, Charles devoted himself to the duties of his position as a clergyman, and continued to write poetry at his leisure. It is interesting to note that he excelled chiefly in the sonnet, which is one of the forms that the Laureate has not cultivated to any extent. Charles Tennyson's first independent publication was (in 1830) a collection of "Sonnets and Fugitive Pieces." He became vicar of Grasby in 1835, and shortly after assumed his grandmother's name of Turner, on succeeding to certain property at her death. His subsequent publications were "Sonnets," dedicated to the Poet Laureate, "Small Tableaux," and (in 1873) "Sonnets, Lyrics, and Translations." In this volume there is what is best and most matured of the poet's works, and it will be sufficient therefore for the present purpose to make use of it in the selection of specimens. At the same time it may be interesting to quote what Archbishop Trench says of the little volume which appeared about the time that Alfred Tennyson published

his "Poems, chiefly Lyrical." This is the Archbishop's estimate, as given in the "Afternoon Lectures on Literature and Art:" "There is a tiny volume of sonnets published by his brother Charles between thirty and forty years ago, which shows plainly that, however the poetical gift may have come to its head in Alfred, he is not the only poet of the family. In this volume, which was published, I think, when he was still at college, there are some sonnets of rare and excellent workmanship." One more readily thinks of workmanship in reading sonnets than in reading other kinds of poetry, and yet it will be found by the intelligent student of Charles Turner's poems that, while his artistic quality is of high excellence, there is in him, too, richness and delicacy of feeling and sentiment, as well as fresh spontaneity and considerable illustrative resource. His little volume will be prized by those who know how to appreciate purity of tone, evenness of temper, and suggestive pathetic reflections.

Sonnets alone, though every one of them were a gem, will hardly make a wide and lasting reputation. While those, for example, that have any familiarity with the subject at all, know that the Earl of Surrey has the reputation of introducing the sonnet, it is questionable whether more than a very small minority have read beyond his sonnet on Spring, which is given in illustrative handbooks. The general reader thinks of Sir Philip Sidney as the accomplished knight who was fatally wounded at Zutphen, and while a few may have dipped into his "Arcadia" or seen extracts from his "Apologie for Poetrie," it is only the exceptional man of letters like Charles Lamb that discovers the genuine beauties of his sonnets. How many readers are there who know that among Spenser's poems may be found a dainty little series of memorial elegies charged with heartfelt grief for the premature death of Astrophel? And how many more could say why this beautiful descriptive title was chosen for Sidney, and who and what was Stella? It is rare to meet a reader who is able to profess acquaintance with even the leading sonneteers of the late Elizabethan time. To say nothing of Spenser, whose sonnets alone (really unworthy of him) would never have made him known to posterity, there are Watson, and Lodge, and Daniel, and above all Henry Constable, whose

sonnets,—perhaps, indeed, whose writings of any kind—are known, if at all, only to professional students of poetry. Even Shakspeare's sonnets are read mainly by those who have been attracted to the subject in connexion with the various theories of origin and purpose. These sonnets are interesting because they are Shakspeare's and because they involve an insoluble literary puzzle ; otherwise, they too would have been familiar to none but exceptional readers. The same has to be said of Milton's sonnets, which Johnson disposed of with faint praise that was not altogether unmerited. The author of "*Paradise Lost*" like the author of the "*Faerie Queene*," and the author of "*In Memoriam*," had not room to work in the sonnet. His method was too expansive, his reach too wide, and his harmonies too elaborate and voluminous for the unyielding limits of the Petrarchan poem. Milton in the sonnet is as much out of place as a cathedral organ would be in one's parlour ; there is no possibility of hearing him, should he express himself to the full, and he simply trifles with his energies by exerting himself in such circumstances at all. Had sonnet-writing been fashionable in the eighteenth century fine work would undoubtedly have been done by Gray and Collins, the former of whom has left one chaste specimen in his "*Death of Richard West*." These are poets whose sonnets would have been appreciated by readers of the class that can discover excellent poetical composition under whatever form. Yet it is not likely that, though each had written two sonnets for every ode he produced, their popularity would have been much wider than it is. Gray would have still have been known to every reader for his "*Elegy*," while Collins would have remained in the dignified obscurity that has always formed a halo about his memory. Shelley and Keats and Coleridge all wrote beautiful sonnets, which, however, give one the impression of having been the pastime of the poets while disengaged from heavier work. "*Fancy in Nubibus*," despite its subtle sublimity of aspiration, and "*Ozymandias*" with all its massive grandeur, add nothing to the reputation of the authors of the "*Ancient Mariner*" and "*Prometheus Unbound*." "*On First looking into Chapman's Homer*," receives a factitious interest from the touching narrative of which it is the climax and glowing

synopsis ; it tells so much about Keats that it gets a popularity not all its own. Blanco White's grand sonnet, in virtue of which he achieved a reputation like that of the renowned "single-speech Hamilton," has not been sufficient to hand him down to posterity outside of the most strictly literary circles, and they are the very elect of readers who know Hartley Coleridge. Wordsworth's sonnets are as exceptional as everything else he wrote ; they have the same beauties and the same flaws as his "Excursion," the same philosophical dignity and chasteness of expression, the same occasional tendency to prosaic commonplace and sturdy egoism. Of all English poets Wordsworth has the best claim to write the sonnet of reflection and sentiment. He would have failed had the fashion in his time still been that of the Elizabethan poets, namely, to produce conventional homage to his Lady, and to ring the changes on the old and worn out theme of the amourists. But with the privilege of doing as seemed good in his own eyes Wordsworth could do excellent work in the sonnet. It was little more trouble to arrange the recognized staves in the legitimate (or for that matter the illegitimate) form than to compose a paragraph of the "Excursion" or draw out the apotheosis of the "Leech Gatherer." Thus Wordsworth has turned the sonnet to account in a most admirable way. Fault may be found with him sometimes in regard to form, or melody, or unity of idea, and the like, but there cannot be a question as to the excellence of his treatment if the sonnet is once accepted as a convenient means of occasional poetical expression. Ordinary readers, of course, do not know Wordsworth's sonnets, but then ordinary readers know nothing of Wordsworth in any sense. It is probably true that, even in this case, little real fame has been added by the sonnets themselves, but there is this at least to be said for them that they are quite as characteristic of the author as his more expanded work. It is not with Wordsworth as with Shakspeare and Milton. You do not find one man in the more elaborate writings and another in the sonnets. And that is wherein lies the strongest defence of Wordsworth as a sonneteer. One thinks less of the mere poetical experiment in reading his sonnets, and more of the natural expression of the philosophical mind.

This is exactly what the judicious reader will find in reading the sonnets of Mr. Charles Tennyson Turner. They come of an inspiration similar to Wordsworth's, and partake little of the Elizabethan and Italian revival that may be noticed in Mrs. Browning's "Sonnets from the Portuguese" and Mr. Rossetti's "House of Life." Mr. Turner's sonnets are not all English in form, but they are English in character and tone, pure, and fresh, and bracing, with more of the rich pensiveness of the blackbird in their sentiment than the indefinite melancholy of the culver. Just as the Rev. Gilbert White of Selborne produced out of his own limited neighbourhood a book of natural history altogether unique, so the Rev. Charles Turner has made Grasby and its amenities the foundation of some beautiful and elevating sentiment and thought; set forth, moreover, in a style of chaste and suggestive simplicity. The insight and quick grasp of the poet are seen in the seizure and transfiguration of little incidents, in the delicate yet firm setting of sudden and even random currents of thought, in the appreciation of something unusually beautiful or noble in scenery or character. There is always poetry at one's hand for the making, if one could just observe the right purpose and have sufficient inspiration to trust to. There is a delusion abroad that literature of the first quality is not possible apart from great cities and books. Such a fantastic conception entirely overlooks all that has been so wisely laid down about "books in the running brooks," as well as the fact about the origin of works like "Venus and Adonis," the "Faerie Queene," and "The Excursion." It is easy to see that poetry like the "Dunciad" and "Absalom and Achitophel" could never have been produced apart from social and political and literary issues of the most imperative kind, but it is also quite evident that much of what is interesting in works like these belongs exclusively to the times in which they were produced. On the other hand, there is a perennial interest about the coming and going of that harbinger of Spring the roaming and romantic cuckoo. What any poet says in an interesting way of such a subject will remain as long as things are what they are, till, in the words of the enthusiastic lover,

"Till a' the seas gang dry."

Michael Bruce's little song of the bower that is ever green is not likely to be soon forgotten, nor Matthew Arnold's happy allusion to the tempestuous day in early June, and the vext garden trees, and the cuckoo's parting cry amid it all,

"The bloom is gone and with the bloom go I."

Anybody can understand and rejoice in poetical thoroughness and rare idealism of this kind ; just too as natures with even a tinge of imagination in them can understand and appreciate Wordsworth's transcription of the boy's notion that the cuckoo is a "wandering voice." It is good earnest of Mr. Tennyson Turner's poetic quality to find him bewailing his disenchantment at seeing a cuckoo in a hedge by the wayside.

O cuckoo ! am I of my wits bereft ?
Or do I hear thee in the hedgerow there ?
The doves of old Dodona never left
Their oak, to babble near a thoroughfare ;
How shall thy mythic character outlive
Thy presence, by thy voice identified ?
How shall the fells and copses e'er forgive
Thy gadding visit to the highway-side ?
How art thou disenchanted ! self-betray'd !
Back, foolish bird ! return whence thou hast stray'd ;
A woody distance is thy vantage-ground ;
Thy song comes sweetest up from Moreham wood ;
Why notify thy claim to flesh and blood ?
The Muses know thee as a mystic sound.

Facing that sonnet there is one that shows not only poetical insight but quick fancy and poetical inspiration as well. It is like Wordsworth in his affection for details and its grasp of the moral features that may be found in the study of outward nature and the lower animals, and there is much of Gilbert White in the author's enthusiasm and in the large dimensions and sudden importance that little things assume under his touch. The combination of elements and the delicacy of suggestion and accuracy of finish are the poet's own. The title of the sonnet is "The Sparrow and the Dewdrop."

When to the birds their morning meal I threw,
Beside one perky candidate for bread
There flash'd and wink'd a tiny drop of dew,
But while I gaz'd I lost them, both had fled ;
His careless tread had struck the blade-hung tear,
And all its silent beauty fell away ;
And left, sole relic of the twinkling sphere,

A sparrow's dabbled foot upon a spray ;
 Bold bird ! that did'st efface a lovely thing
 Before a poet's eyes ! I've half a mind,
 Could I but single thee from out thy kind,
 To mulct thee in a crumb ; a crumb to thee
 Is not more sweet than that fair drop to me ;
 Fie on thy little foot and thrumming wing.

A sonnet that is particularly well-conceived and worked, and that if not very regular in form, is at any rate fanciful and fairly exhaustive of the single idea is "Emmeline." This one comes as near as any in the collection to what may be called the love-sonnet, and it is a love-sonnet with this very material difference from the ordinary composition of that kind that the love is not subjective. The poet here does not mourn the hardness of his lady towards him, does not complain that she lends a deaf ear unto his entreaties, does not find that when he cries she laughs or doth rejoice at his pine. Now that the sonnet may be used for description and reflection, and not merely for the expression of ideal passion, or emotion that at length tends to be monotonous and mechanical, the sonneteer has privileges that his ancestors knew nothing of. Instead of inditing a sonnet to his mistress's eyebrow, as the forlorn poet was driven in extremities to do, in the days of melancholy Jaques, it is open now to write, say, about the loves of one's neighbours, or the interests of certain daughters that one takes pleasure in observing from day to day. With a gentle humourist like Mr. Tennyson Turner such a privilege is not abused ; on the other hand one rejoices in the genial "man of middle age" or a little more that can write in this way. Moreover, it is at least the half of a most thrilling love-tale told with all faithfulness and simplicity within the narrow compass of a single sonnet. Notice the emphatic significance of all the epithets, the happy choice of expressive words, and the melody of the movement.

She grows apace, thy darling Emmeline !
 Her heart, erewhile but two feet from the ground,
 Beats at a higher level, in the line
 Of many arches, pressing daily round ;
 She doffs aside the aim of Jones and Brown ;
 But, though a surer arrow has been set
 By a young marksman from the neighbouring town,
 It lingers on the string,—he speaks not yet.

When two love well, events must onward move ;
 She feels a winning hand is on the bow,
 And, if he asks, she will not answer 'No' ;
 And, Emmeline to him is life's sole mark,
 He knows she loves him, and she knows his love ;
 Speed, gentle shaft ! thou aim'st not in the dark !

It is impossible to pass over one sonnet without quotation ; namely, "Called from Bed ; or, Lizzie and Kate." It requires a special faculty to depict child-life properly—to catch the innocent buoyancy, the remote yet full sympathies, the promise as of spring blossom—and Mr. Charles Turner possesses it. Wordsworth was fond of children, and has done much for the poetry of their existence, but he has nothing at once so delicate and graceful, so familiar and yet so reverent as this. It is as true to nature as William Blake and entirely without fantastic ornament. Let it be premised that the word "stee" means a ladder, and then the picture, or rather succession of pictures will tell a tale of innocence and sweet pathos.

With merry eyes against the golden west,
 Two baby-girls half-sat, and half-repos'd ;
 And prattl'd in the sunshine, ere they clos'd
 That summer's eve in childhood's balmy rest ;
 But, hark ! their mother calls them from below,
 She bids them rise ! Right glad we were to see
 The twain, whose happy talk came down the stee,
 Lizzie and Kate, with night-gear white as snow,
 And winsome looks. And when with nod and smile.
 And kiss for each, we left the woodside cot,
 Upon the warm bright threshold for a while
 They stood, as we look'd back upon the spot,
 Where crimson hollyhocks made contrast sweet
 With those white darlings, and their naked feet.

Similar delicacy of feeling and reverence for childhood appear in "Little Nora" and "On a Child's Eyes," and many readers will no doubt remember the charming picture portrayed in *Macmillan* at the beginning of 1876, the subject being "Letty's Globe." While, however, the poet is thus interesting on subjects of domestic interest, and gently humorous and didactic in his own quiet way where he may be said to be an authority, he can look out upon the world and calculate what are the chances his own country has among the nations. Even as Wordsworth, after losing hopes of the renovation of

society through the French Revolution, continued to look forth from his retreat among the hills and lakes and to fulminate against Napoleon, so Mr. Tennyson Turner can look away from the Lincolnshire flats and dread the possibility (from symptoms he detects not afar off) that England may after all degenerate into Napoleon's nation of shop-keepers.

Too oft, when burthen'd with our chests and bales,
From the four winds we bring our freightage home,
We help to strike our country's honour dumb ;
Her noble voice once heard above the gales,
Is lost among the storage, while the prayer
Of our weak neighbours finds us slow to dare.

This is mainly interesting, of course, by way of contrast, just as Wordsworth's politics are set off by his rare idealism. At the same time, all Mr. Turner's sonnets on the subject of honour and arms are well worthy of perusal even from the point of view of a practical man. Several other fine studies, such as those connected with a visit of Wales, it is impossible to touch upon further here ; and it only remains for us to say further that the poet has bequeathed a valuable legacy, in fine sentiment, quiet genial humour, and bracing reflection to all cultured readers. He has not written for him who runs, nor has he written for the mob that besieges railway book-stalls and public libraries ; but wherever a man is living a life of noble purpose, doing what his hand finds to do and striving for the right, wherever purity and uprightness are honoured and hypocrisy discouraged, wherever lofty idealism is upheld over what is merely material and gross, there will there be the genuine love and the understanding heart for the sonnets of Charles Tennyson Turner. In his own words it may be said,

No feeble glow of intellectual flame
Informed that Painter's heart ; to none more due
Than him the honours of domestic fame.

THOMAS BAYNE.



THE THEATRE.

IT is a question often asked but never, as it appears, satisfactorily answered, whether to instruct or to amuse be the particular province of the stage: but on one point, at least, a judgment has been given from which no sensible person has ever sought to appeal, that to disgust and repel is altogether foreign from the purpose of playing. Such a work as 'Drink,' now being acted at the Princess's Theatre, however well contrived its scenes may be, however vigorous the language, and however skilful the actors, cannot be described as other than disgusting, and, as such, has no proper place upon the stage. That it has proved attractive to some people, and will prove attractive to many more, as it very probably will, in no way weakens the argument. There are always to be found in every community, and among all classes of people, some natures that find an unwholesome pleasure in the contemplation of loathsome and degrading images. But it no more follows that a play is good because it is applauded by pit and gallery than that a picture is good because it is hung on the walls of the Royal Academy. The argument that such a piece as this is a legitimate subject for the stage because it finds people to clap it is as silly as is the behaviour of the critics who have admired the exquisite fidelity and correctness of copies of which they have no knowledge of the originals.

We take it that every person with any pretensions, we will not say to literature, but to a knowledge of what is passing in the world, has heard of M. Zola, and his novels, and knows that Mr. Charles Reade's 'Drink' is a version of *L'Assommoir*, the last and most disgusting of them all. Whether our assumption be right or wrong we have at least no design to introduce to the attention of our readers works which we most strongly advise them not to waste their time in reading. They are dull, dirty, and obscure; when not shamelessly and vulgarly

ney are simply nasty. There is neither wit, nor either art nor nature in them. The sole virtue they he virtue of industry; an admirable virtue, indeed, by reason of the immense power it possesses, when n unworthy and shameful subjects becomes one of dious and pernicious of vices.

enough then to say that the English play is a suffici- ul version of the French play, for of course *L'Assom-* . once put into theatrical shape and is now nearing at its two hundreth night of representation. Between id the play there are, however, many discrepancies. should be such was inevitable for it was absolutely im- present to the eyes, even of a French audience, much rank in greedily enough with their ears. But in pro- uch works lose what their champions are pleased to ncompromising fidelity to nature so they lose what- re of reason there may be in their existence. If they humanity from vice by presenting the monster—

In such frightful mein

As to be hated needs but to be seen.

ist spare no jot or tittle of her personality. In- assuredly nothing is spared, but in the play his, as we have said, was inevitable, and know- be inevitable M. Zola and his collaborators, it from under their feet the small and unsta- tion on which alone they could pretend to r. Reade had, of course, in the circumstances no but to follow the course prescribed for him. Of which he has performed his self-imposed task we mplaint to make ; we do not indeed propose to for, as a dramatic work, it appears to us to be ond the pale of criticism. That he has illumined ne with a faint ray of light in suggesting a future for ; is, we may suppose, for the sake of adhering in o that unwritten tradition of the stage which insists. on a serene and cheerful conclusion. But it is certain kens the stage effect of the piece, as it not only entails. hnically known as an anti-climax, but also detracts.

M. Zola and his school would call, we presume, of their story. This, however, as we have said,

had been already so materially weakened, allowing it, for the sake of the argument, to have ever existed, that Mr. Reade may be pardoned for having rather lost sight of it at last, if, indeed, he can be imagined to have ever perceived it.

What, then, did Mr. Reade propose to himself when he undertook a work which we should be sorry to think could have been otherwise than disagreeable to him, if only from an artistic point of view? A practical man might answer at once, to make money; to write a play that his experience of the English theatre had shown him would fill his own pockets, and the pockets of the manager who may be wise, or daring, enough to produce it. Such an answer, if it be accepted, of course at once closes the argument. But we should be willing to credit Mr. Reade with some higher purpose than this, and this only. For, though in one sense the man who writes plays and the man who produces them may be regarded as tradesmen selling goods to the public, and therefore obliged to provide that form of entertainment for which the readiest market is to be found, this is not a plea which can be allowed to cover all misdemeanours. We do not know that a man convicted of selling indecent books would be excused by his judges because he found his account in selling them.

Moreover Mr. Reade himself, or someone for Mr. Reade, has authorised us to look for some higher motive. Previous to the production of his play the newspapers teemed with sounding anticipations of the inestimable lesson that was to be taught. The Temperance Society to a man were to be there; half the clergymen in England had taken places; it was rumoured even in some quarters that Sir Wilfrid Lawson himself was to speak a prologue. But does Mr. Reade or those who affect to think with Mr. Reade really believe that one human being will be redeemed from intemperance by the spectacle of two girls drenching each other with buckets of water, or of a man feigning to die in a fit of delirium tremens? It is not by such means that the stage instructs; not by attempting to force upon us a moral which we do not accept as such, because we know it has, as there expressed, no part or lot with that world in which we live, but is of, and belonging to, that painted pasteboard world, whose creations we should be able to find a pleasure in contemp-

relief to the hard, barren facts of our actual life. It is much the business of the dramatist to point and to adorn a tale. Wit, taste, and sensibility; these are the elements the dramatist should employ to deck the work of his fancy—not waste his time over what can be accurate copies of foul and worthless originals. What taste, what sensibility, is there in ‘Drink?’ People of education and refinement know it to be decidedly repulsive; they do not know it to be true. What it is intended to convey has been a household word from the beginning of the world, and that class of society to which it is specially directed know far more about it than Mr. Zola can tell them. It brought home no truth to the people that they did not already know. It needs not Mr. Reade to tell them that the excessive use of ardent spirits will ruin their health and their fortune. Where the play was didactic and moral, as he occasionally was, it was in the mouth of one of his characters, he was voted unnecessary. Where he presented pictures that were absurd and horrible he was applauded to the skies. These pictures pleased because they had something at the same time being familiar and something unknown. They dealt with characters and treated of matters that bore at least some resemblance to reality which one is accustomed to find in life, and which your critic of the gallery does not foolishly wish to adhere to nature. On the other hand, it had never gone before quite so far as this. Realism about, and a man falling from a broken scaffold, and very eyes! Surely this was something like a show. It was only a show; there was nothing real in it. There was no fun and excitement of the reality, and none of those agreeable elements which are unfortunately inseparable from the stage. There are no coroners or police magistrates on the stage; if there are, they are as unreal as the things and the people with whom they have to deal. It is something like this we conceive to be the real life of the people with whom Mr. Reade's play is popular. But we have perhaps said enough and enough on a very worthless subject. Our desire is to put the matter in its true light, and not to allow

a disagreeable and disgusting play to affect a virtue which does not belong to it, and to win, on the assumed ground of a moral result which does not, and cannot, excite sympathy which would otherwise be inevitably refused.

This has been the most prominent feature of the past if we except the performances of the actors of the Comédie Française. Of these we do not propose to speak, for they have indeed, been commented on almost ad nauseam. We may ever incidentally observe that if one tithe of what has been written about them in our newspapers be true, no such fine specimens of genius, pure and undefiled, have ever yet been seen upon the earth. They can do no wrong; and the easiest way to exalt an object is to debase every other object. Our critics can find no better means to show their unbounded admiration and delight for these specimens of living art made perfect by the most consummate art than by degrading and vilifying their own stage and all that belongs to it. This is a twofold pity; a pity, because exact and judicious criticism might here be of real service to our theatre and our actors; a pity, because this extravagant and ridiculous epidemic of admiration will inevitably bring that reaction under which good as well as bad will alike go down. From one extreme we shall rush to the other, and when we have discovered how foolishly we have been belauding many things that are but indifferent, and how many that are absolutely bad, we shall be tempted to think that part of our indiscriminate raptures can have been truly deserved.

When the management of the Lyceum Theatre first passed into the hands of Mr. Irving, it was announced in the newspapers that the regeneration of our Drama, long and long expected, but almost despaired of, was at last to begin. An exalted purpose, unwearying study, a correct education, a correct taste, all these virtues were claimed by the new manager, even where it was allowed that perhaps his execution did not always rise to the level of his promises. Assuredly these large promises have not as yet been fulfilled. When Miss Ellen Terry became a member of the company, and was universally hailed as an earnest of good intentions, the theatre presumed to be devoted to the presentation of the highest and most poetic order of the drama could scarcely do better than secure the services of the most refined

ress of the day. But from all this labour what a little mouse has come forth! To be sure we have .et, and Miss Terry played Ophelia, and played it with and charm of truth and tenderness that could not be . But we have had Mr. Irving's Hamlet a good es before, and if the Ophelia was taken away, and as a personage in the play is of comparative nce, there was not very much else to admire of course, a great many people admire, or are to admire, the Hamlet very much, on which e may perhaps have something to say on another

After Hamlet came the Lady of Lyons. Here s Terry was charming, and not the less charming she evolved a Pauline out of her own sensibility treading slavishly in the beaten track of her prede- But concerning the Claude even flattery itself was low we are to have Eugene Aram and Charles : professedly for Mr. Irving and for Mr. Irving uis XI., in which there is practically only one and Richelieu in which there is little more! This is eration of the Drama! this is the great Avatar for have been sighing! In some of these plays there is not t for Miss Terry, and in not one of them is there a part her, or of any actress of real powers. This is only the s of Mr. Irving, and were Mr. Irving all, and more is admirers proclaim him to be, we must still decline that the Drama is to be regenerated by the indi- rification of one man. We should be more hopeful e quite sure that Mr. Irving was of the same opinion. respect the Prince of Wales' Theatre offers an agree- ast to the Lyceum. We do not at all hold with think that the Bancroft dynasty can do no wrong. y we have condemned their judgment in producing rthless in themselves, or unsuited to the company o present them; sometimes, we have thought the itively bad. But there has never been seen at this at odious apotheosis of the individual which is the r stage. Whatever the play chosen, the smallest has always been as carefully cast, and received as ention, as the highest. It has been found no more

possible here than elsewhere to command success, but, in this respect at least, no labour has been spared to deserve it. the present programme may be found a notable proof of "Good for Nothing," a very popular old farce, familiar proof to most of our readers, is being played. Nan, the maid of work, from whom the piece derives its title, was a famous of Mrs. Bancroft's in the days when she was known as Miss Wilton, and in the opinion of many good judges is the part she has ever played. Allowing for the inevitable influence of time, she plays it now with no decrease of vivacity or humour, but she is not the only figure in the piece. Surrounded by intelligent and practised actors her excellence is but enhanced and perfected by theirs. She is not the moon which shines supreme among lesser stars, but the stars which by their brilliancy add new lustre to the moon. With Mr. Gilberts 'Sweethearts' we are not so well pleased. We have never been able to share in the admiration that this play has excited in all quarters. It is neatly written, indeed, like all the author's work, and contains, of course, its proper proportion of 'sentiment' though tolerably obvious, sayings. But it has always struck us as unreal, and is far too long for the subject. With neither the characters can we feel any sympathy. The pity aroused for the man in the first act is destroyed by his conduct in the second, and the punishment the woman receives in the second is no more we feel than she deserves from her conduct in the first. Mrs. Bancroft is admirable in the second act; years ago she would have been admirable in the first. And actresses, however clever they may be, are but numbered with the rest of us, and the one critic from whose verdict there is no appeal is Time. Looking back over an almost unbroken career of success surely this clever lady might have selected a character in which she could have revived her pleasures without provoking our comparisons. If, as we are given to understand, the end of her stage life is now drawing near, we could wish to carry away of those last days none but the most agreeable recollections. Many people can remember Madeleine Brohan in the high tide of her youthful triumph; that memory is now gratefully revived by the contemplation of her maturer powers.



TRIPLE ACROSTIC No. 7.

Pray don't pretend that you don't care to win it ;
You're trying to do so this very minute.

I.

I hurt my finger ; it began to swell ;
This I applied, and lo ! t'was straightway well.

FLOI E.

SOLUTION OF DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 6.

R	hu	M
A	nnea	U
C	aba	S
I	ncroyable	S
N	oisett	E
E	ta	T

Correct answers have been received from Dowager—Quite
a young thing too—Beolne—Brevette—Shark—P.V.—La
; Belle Alliance—Artemisia—Black Beetle—Charmione—
Nursery ; 11 correct and 47 incorrect—total 58.



MESOSTICH No. 7.

In this you will find, as you know French of co
A term of contempt and the name of a horse.

1.

Tattered velvet, rags of silk,
Wore the hero of this ilk.

2.

Her eyes, 't'is said, grew "soft for an hour ;
Her mouth was *this*, and red as a flower.

3.

Will it never improve this year ? No never
And I really will *not* say : "Hardly ever !"

SOLUTION OF MESOSTICH No. 6.

an	C	re
marc	H	ande
m	A	l
a	M	è.

Correct answers have been received from Artemisia—
young thing too—Charmione—S.P.E—Shark—Do
Beolne—What, Never?—Brevette—P.V.—Nursery—
Alliance—Miserere ; 13 correct and 48 incorrect—t

ACROSTIC AND MESOSTICH RULES.

I.—Each number of the *St. James's Magazine* will contain a Double Acrostic and a Mesostich.

II.—In *each* competition Three Annual Prizes, in money (1st prize twenty-five guineas, 2nd prize ten guineas, 3rd prize five guineas), will be awarded to the three most successful solvers.

III.—Special competitions will be held for guessing off ties (if any).

IV.—Prize-winners will be required to furnish their names and addresses for publication.

V.—The same solver may win prizes in both competitions.

VI.—Only *one* word can be accepted as the solution of *each* light.

VII.—Answers addressed to "The Acrostic Editor," 5, Friar Street, Ludgate Hill, E.C., must be posted in time to be received by the first post on the 10th of each month, or on the 11th, if the 10th falls on a Sunday.

VIII.—In accordance with the wishes of numerous Subscribers, the Acrostic and Mesostiches for March, June, September and December will be in French.



St. James's Magazine.

AUGUST, 1879.

HUBERT MAITLAND'S WRAITH.

A NOVEL.

By FELIX HOLLAND.

CHAPTER XVII.

PHILIP OUT OF HIS ELEMENT.

PHILIP arose and exchanged the troubled dreams of night for those of day. The unrest which had seized on him was merging to despair. The exuberant gladness of Mr. Scroggs failed to cheer him, and escaping from the house he found himself wandering under the elms of Kensington Gardens. All day long he remained there, sometimes lying listlessly on the grass, sometimes sauntering through the shady avenues, playing, with a poor forced smile, with the children who were about, or deciphering names which idiot youths had carved in the smooth bark of beeches twenty, forty, sixty years ago—names which ironic Nature had preserved longer than many a fashionable fame that dainty lips have bruited under their shadows. Sometimes a school-girl or governess would pass and glance shyly at the beautiful boy's face, he heeding them not. When evening came he returned to the Crown and Candle. He took down the violin, and played the dolefullest airs of a dozen doleful operas, and naturally failing to escape his distracting thoughts by such efforts, he again strolled out into the twilight. But there was no peace, the demon of jealousy had seized on him, and he wandered up and down the road as aimless and restless as the first stray autumn leaves that rustled at his feet.

Soon he was startled by the sound of approaching wheels, and, stepping aside, a light carriage whirled swiftly by, not so swiftly, however, but that he had time to recognize Emily Aldair. She greeted him with a sad sweet smile, and a little flutter of her tiny gloved hand, which the speed of the horses prevented his returning, and the next moment was far away in the twilight, leaving Philip standing confused but ungladdened by the road side.

As he strained his eyes after the vanishing carriage his heart ceased beating, and his knees smote together as if inspired with an ungovernable terror. But it was not for long. Soon the pent up yearning overmastered every other feeling, and with crimsoned cheeks and flashing eyes he gave a great forward bound. His resolution was taken. He would follow her, would feast his eyes once more upon her face, speak to her, if it were possible, one word of unreproachful deathless devotion and farewell, and then, and then, well? anything, vagabondage, madness, death, what mattered then?

Reckless of all but his purpose, he bounded along the dusty road, and was soon nearly abreast of the carriage. Then he slackened pace. He did not wish Emily to see him thus. No, he would follow and accost her when she alighted. He could easily keep pace with Aldair's greys, and open the carriage door at the journey's end, touch her hand as she alighted, feel her breath on his cheek, perhaps be thanked by her.

For a good six miles the horses bounded on, but it seemed hardly one to him. The coachman drew up at the gates of a large old-fashioned mansion, beyond whose slanting grounds the river lay gleaming. But, alas! a swarm of ladies and gentlemen clustered to the carriage door, and with a smile for all except the weary pedestrian, who stood panting under the shadow of the hedgerow, she rustled up the garden walk and into the house.

Philip felt sick and faint; he had overtasked his strength, and but for the support of the thick privet hedge he would have fallen. A peal of merry laughter brought him to himself. Then a swarm of ladies and gentlemen poured from the house into the garden. There they formed an irregular procession, and laughing and chatting, streamed past him and

down the narrow road. Then Philip noticed that all the gentlemen had suits of white flannel under their overcoats, and wore blue and white caps—they were going for a moonlight trip on the river. And Emily was there—he could not see her face, but the fairy-like form was unmistakable in its delicate grace and beauty, both the more remarkable by contrast with the great-bearded, rudely clad companion on whose arm she leant. Him, too, Philip thought he recognized, but could not be sure, his rough boating suit had so transformed him, and a pang of jealous envy shot through his heart.

The party turned down an umbrageous lane, which in a few seconds brought them to the river side, where a fleet of boats lay darkling on the moonlit water. The great bearded man for a moment relinquished Emily's little hand and gave some hurried directions to his companions, then the boats were drawn up to the wooden steps, and the whole company embarked and rowed away, Emily's burly partner taking his seat opposite her and leading the way, his long sculls bending beneath his grip, like willow wands in the water.

For three hundred yards Philip saw them gliding away, and heard their laughter dying on the breeze. They disappeared, and the watcher turned away. Another fleet of empty pleasure boats were moored at a wharf near at hand. Philip ran to them; they were for hire, and selecting the smallest and swiftest of these, he was soon afloat and in chase of the pleasure party.

Now the cleverest young man of continental rearing is apt to find himself rather awkward in a Thames outrigger, and with many curses on his clumsiness and foolhardy conceit, the boat attendant ordered him "to come back and get in a tub."

But Philip knew no danger, and by dint of brute strength and ignorance tugged the dapper little craft down the stream. The pleasure fleet was now in sight, for it had turned back and was creeping up under the bank.

Fearing to be recognized, Philip steered to the opposite side. The pleasure party raised a loud shout as he passed, but he was so intently trying to discern Emily's slim little figure to heed its import. And in the silence that followed the cry he noticed for the first time the dull roar of a cataract; it was Teddington weir. But he discerned his danger too

late. His little boat had dropped into mid stream, and refused to answer to the sculls. The position was a critical one even for a trained athlete, if ignorant of the water; for Philip it was almost certain death. Again the loud voice rang in his ears.

“Too late, you will never turn her; you must swim for it.”

Though no oarsman, Philip was an expert swimmer; but in his endeavours to save the boat he delayed too long, and only leapt into the water in time to see the fragile craft cracked up like a match box and carried over the roaring torrent.

The next instant he was dashed against a high pile in the water. A chain was attached, and fortunately he succeeded in grasping it. A moment he breathed, and thought himself safe. But the torrent crashed him fiercer and fiercer against the pile, as though it would tear his limbs from their sockets. Love is stronger than death. Feeling that his end was near he turned his head that his last look might rest on Emily Aldair.

But what was this drifting swiftly towards him, some dark object bobbing up and down in the torrent? It reached him, dashing with fearful violence against the wooden pile. Then a great arm was thrown around his waist, and he felt himself lifted bodily out of the water.

“Keep your head, young ’un, and it will be all right. Philip looked up; it was the Captain of the pleasure fleet, Emily’s gigantic companion Alaric. Alaric, the man whose handsome horror-stricken face had haunted him ever since he first beheld it a few nights ago, under the eves of the Crown and Candle, with whose dark history he had unwillingly become a little conversant through that interview he had witnessed in the garden of Hammersmith, on whose head lay the ruin, and but for Philip might have lain the death, of dear beautiful Pearl.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PHILIP FINDS HIMSELF IN HIS ELEMENT.

HELP was soon at hand, ropes were thrown them, and, thanks to the coolness and strength of Philip's companion, they were dragged through the hurrying water, and found themselves, half-choked and panting, in one of the pleasure boats. The others crowded round, the ladies so far forgot good manners as to be loud and collective in praise of the heroism of their companion; the gentlemen were so rude as to be noisily vituperative of the muff who had spoiled the fun of the party, and imperilled the life of their captain. And, above it all, there rose a little scream of mingled joy and terror, at which sound every voice was hushed, and peering through the night, Philip beheld Emily Aldair's beautiful little face, lying white and still across the prow of the nearest boat. The next instant she was hidden by her companions.

Philip sprang up, in his madness he would have plunged through the river to her aid. But the strong hand of his preserver was on him.

"Stay," he said, in a low suppressed voice. His great dark eyes burned with a new fire as they bent in their eagerness close to Philip's face, so close that the latter saw the trembling of his white lips and the fierce contraction of his brow, "Stay, sir, the young lady is with friends, and has no need of us."

Philip sat silent while the boat impelled by the skilful sculls of his companion drifted alongside that of Emily Aldair.

Then he heard her voice saying, timidly,

"It's Signor Celini, an old friend of mine."

Philip strained his eyes, but it was fast growing darker, and the boat whence the voice proceeded was thronged with curious faces.

"What, you don't say so? that's a double reason for being thankful," returned a man's voice, which Philip recognised as that of a stout old gentleman who had been rowing in the same boat with Emily.

"Alaric Fane. Alaric Fane!" called the same voice, "here is Miss Aldair proclaiming herself an acquaintance of your fellow water-rat. Why, it's quite a night of adventure. Bring

him home to the Lodge, Bring him home, Fane! ready, row!"

"Hold hard a minute, sir," cried Philip's companion, leaning on his sculls.

"Can't" replied the other, "Do you think I am going to have my Gondola invaded by you water-rats? Come home and dry yourselves, and don't get playing any more tricks to make ladies faint."

Philip and his rescuer were now alone in their boat, for the other young fellows had migrated to their respective crews, and were pulling slowly up the stream. Alaric Fane gave his great shaggy head a shake like some Newfoundland dog, then dipped his blades in the water and followed.

"Hold," he exclaimed, suddenly resting, "you had better take an oar or you will catch cold. By the way, how came you to venture down an unknown river?"

Philip stammered some guilty excuse, and took the oar, not so much out of fear of catching cold, as to avoid the great dark eyes that were scrutinizing him.

"So you know Miss Aldair?" asked his companion, with a curious earnestness.

"Yes, that is I have had the pleasure of meeting the lady."

"Well, you will have the pleasure of meeting her again directly, if you will have the goodness not to try to touch the bottom of the river at every stroke."

Philip endeavoured to imitate his companion's feather, and caught a bad crab for his pains, at which Alaric laughingly remarked that his feet were too small to serve for sails, and advised him to keep them on the footboard till such time as he found himself on terra firma.

Philip silently resumed his windmilling. After a while he asked,

"What did you mean just now by saying I shall soon meet Miss Aldair again?"

"Why, Cotton has invited you to supper."

"Invited me to supper?" queried Philip.

"Of course, didn't you hear him? Miss Aldair has claimed you for a friend. How could Cotton do less?"

Awhile they proceeded in silence except for the splashing of Philip's unskilful oar, then he said hesitatingly,

"May I ask the name of the gentleman to whose heroism I owe my life."

"Humph ! a pretty sort of hero certainly. My name is Fane, Alaric Fane, very much at your service and—the Devil's. Here we are, ship your oar, t'other end forward, so. Lord, won't I be just glad to temper some of the Thames water in my stomach with a bottle of Cotton's Cognac !"

They entered the house where they were at once surrounded by a congratulatory crowd, foremost of which was Emily Aldair. She extended her hand timidly to Philip, but she failed to conceal her blushes, as did Philip his equally evident emotion. But these, owing to the exciting circumstances under which they met, passed nearly unobserved by all save Alaric, whose keen eyes seemed to take in the exact situation at a glance.

In a few minutes the two reeking young fellows found themselves in Mr. Cotton's dressing-room, busily appropriating such masculine habiliments as the house afforded.

Alaric was easily accoutred, for Mr. Cotton's garments were ample in girth, if deficient by a few inches in length, which shortcomings were effectually concealed by an antique dressing gown and top boots.

But Philip, the fastidious, proved a much more difficult subject. Fortunately Alaric called to mind a costume of Miss Cotton's that had been constructed for some private theatricals in which that young lady was wont to assume the role of a dashing young troubadour.

Miss Cotton gladly conceded this lovely garnish of a boy, and Philip seemed not at all displeased with the theatrical suit.

Alaric laughed and jested so heartily during these rehabilitary arrangements that Philip soon found himself quite at his ease.

All the bitterness and jealousy he had felt at the thought of a possible rival vanished before the real one. For, in that brief interview he had just had with Emily, behind all her assumed coolness he had read in voice and eye the old confident unchangeable love. As he stood by the piano in his romantic costume, with his beautiful face flushed with passion and pride, every eye in the room turned on him admiringly. But

ur marvellous voice burst with its torrent of
 : listening audience, thrilling and ringing through
 buried her little blushing face in Mary Cotton's
 ecretly wept with delight and love. But Alaric
 l a great oath between his clenched teeth, and,
 drank off half a decanter of wine before the song
 could it be he too was in love with this pretty,
 girl? One would think not, for when the song
 lause was more sincere than his. And when the
 ny separated, as the happiest company must,
 Philip walked home through the lonely roads
 hen they reached Hammersmith, Alaric halted.
 art here, this is my home at present," he said.
 lded, "I hope to meet you again some day Mr.
 re do you live?"
 ng at the Crown and Candle at Kensington,"
 , watching his companion's face.
 ic's turn to start now, but he only said "Good
 tened away.

CHAPTER XIX.

CONCERNING EMILY'S FRIENDS.

ld that a person who was fortunate enough to
 to Mr. Cotton and his daughter by so respectable
 ice as the daughter of the great Aldair should be
 eat his visit. It was very natural that a young
 with the beauty, the grace, of an Adonis, who
 neus or Rubini, should repeat his visit again and
 s most natural that the friend of Emily Aldair
 is visits as near as possible with hers, that he
 to sit a little nearer to her, that he should talk
 o her, sing a little more to her, gaze a little
 little more kindly at her, take her hand just a
 nderly, and hold it just a little longer:
 repeat was very natural and passed unobserved

by Philip's host, Robert Cotton, Esq., brother-in-law and fellow merchant of the great Aldair.

A right worthy man was Robert Cotton : was said to be not so well to do as formerly, but his house was still frequented by troops of friends who, if they found his hospitalities less lavish, were amply compensated by the good gentleman's kindly interest in their pleasures, and the charming society of his accomplished daughter Mary. Though only three years older than her cousin Emily, Miss Cotton looked quite a woman, and already evinced several unmistakable signs of old-maidism. But she wore her rue with a difference, and looked such a sweet, thoughtful, tender old maid that many a man had thought her good enough to be his wife, all of which thoughts Mary had laughed into silence as soon as intimated, for Mary's mother was dead, and Mary was not the sort of girl to desert a kind indulgent father for a young and ardent lover.

No wonder Philip found himself at ease in such a home, in a home whose owner (merchant though he was) made no scruple of asserting that an educated pennyless gentleman was always the peer, and often the superior, of a shopkeeper prince. Of course had Mr. Cotton been aware of the precise nature of the relationship existing between his new guest and his brother-in-law's daughter, he would have known what was his duty, and would have done it too in some considerate tender fashion. Meanwhile, the young musician was greeted with frank honest smiles, was free to laugh, and sing, and dance, with the great Aldair's daughter, and Mr. Abraham Moss's selected bride, careless of the approaching doom as the swallows of the winter. For him, as for them, there was no future. His former jealousy and misery passed like an April shower, and to love and sing and flirt in the sunshine was enough.

CHAPTER XX.

A PICNIC—A HISTORY AND A PROPOSAL.

titious of the pleasure of his Mary and her friends, n was in the habit of complying with her request is to an extent that might have spoiled any less- or less sensible girl. One day, soon after Philip's Mary wanted a picnic party—the Carters, their s, had had a picnic party, and Mary had enjoyed .!—"We really must have a picnic party."

kind old ex-Alderman set himself to work with all al energy to find out the nature, localities, and of picnic parties in general. Finding it impossible the affair with the secrecy and perfection he desired, r. Fane, as the most experienced of his acquaintances onfidence, and desired that gentleman to spare no roviding an entertainment worthy Mr. Cotton's nd equal to his daughter's expectations.

oyfully undertook the task, only conditioning that its should not be challenged.

a wonderful picnic. All the young people of the acquaintance were there, all except Mr. Moss, who nately, been overlooked.. And there were musicians them, and flowers, and bonbon bizarres, and wines, sions of the most delicate, the most unheard of, sness and variety, all piled in the boats which, all with festive colours, were moored at the river's edge or the assembling guests. There was nobody d, because somebody else was not invited; there scussion as to who should sit here or who should there was nothing forgotten, nothing unprovided; pleasantly arranged as never picnic was before. clerk of the weather, that sworn enemy of all such got his old spite, and the morning sun shone mildly a cloudless sky. Oh, how the water laughed as it er the splashing oars, for all the rowers were not e oarsmen like Alaric Fane. But that only made ie greater, as it sprinkled the spray over the ladies.

faces and their imperishable dresses. Then the ladies themselves had to take an oar, and so there was a pretty performance. Thus laughter grew and the boats sped merrily on over the bright water.

It was understood that the party was to proceed as far as Staines, there disembark, and make its camp under the shade of a great tree, to lunch, and afterwards to drop leisurely to Richmond hill, that being deemed a more convenient spot for losing each other when the general glee grew tame.

With his usual magnanimity Alaric placed his rival (who of course was present) and Emily Aldair together, although he might, as Captain of the party, justly have taken the coveted seat himself. He must have bitterly repented his generosity before the day was over. Emily and Philip, with the unconscious selfishness of lovers, no sooner found themselves side by side than they became oblivious of everybody but each other.

Oh, it was very good to see them sitting there so happy, in the first glow of youth and love, she so pretty, he so fresh and exultant, thought Mr. Cotton, as he sat with his arm round Mary's waist in another boat. He smiled on them as they passed, and thought he had never before seen a prettier pair. And Alaric sat tugging at his oars with a laughing, careless face, and a heart more bitter than a galley-slave's.

Now the latter had resolved that he would this day put an end to a certain suspense which had long lain aching on his heart. It is true he had little hope, but his good sense told him that his chance was slowly dwindling. When therefore, near the close of the day, Mary drew Emily aside, and, under the pretence of showing her a new point of the landscape, led her up a lonely lane away from the rest, Alaric watched his opportunity, and, escaping unobserved, he followed them.

In a few minutes he discovered the deserters sitting on the gnarled root of an oak, Mary was talking very earnestly and Emily was crying.

"Ha, my Rosalind and Celia, I have found you at last," cried Alaric, trying to look merry with a very ill success. "What, tears!" he continued. "Cry you mercy, I took

you for Rosalind, you must be Niobe. Ah! now you laugh you are neither, but Titania, Queen of the Fairies."

"Then you must be Puck, who thus vexes Her Majesty with your unexpected presence," laughed Mary.

"So please you, I had rather be Bottom the weaver."

"You will have your wish," replied Mary, archly. "I see by your eye you are going to make a donkey of yourself."

Alaric did not quite relish this banter, and almost wished he had not begun it.

"Miss Cotton,"—he began, seriously.

But that discreet little lady had already divined his wishes, and was tripping down the hill. Emily was about to follow, when he took her hand and gently detained her.

"Do not leave me," he pleaded, "sit down a little while and tell me why you are crying."

There was something in his manner so different from his wont that Emily could not forbear an enquiring glance at his handsome face. She resumed her seat meekly, and even permitted Alaric to take her hand. It seemed so easy to obey when he commanded.

"Dear Miss Aldair," he said, "do not think me impertinent. For a long time I have observed you are not happy. I am older than you, and should be wiser, will you not tell me your trouble?"

Emily was still silent, but the tears which had dried a moment were glittering on her rosy cheeks afresh, as she said softly,

"You are too good Mr. Fane, and," with a kind glance into his deep sad eyes, "I am neither so young nor so ignorant as not to know you have trouble enough of your own. Pray leave me with mine."

"Well," said Alaric, seating himself at her side, "since you cannot confide your grief to me, let me confide mine to you. All suffering souls are kin; and after the contemplation of another's sorrow may alleviate our own."

Emily still sat with averted face, she made no sign and Alaric resumed.

"Mine is not a pleasant story and I hardly know how to find words to suit it to a lady's ear. You are doubtless aware that my parents died young. My father had risen from

poverty to opulence by his own exertions. But his anxiety to acquire wealth had allowed him no time to acquire friends, thus his only son, the inheritor of his riches, entered upon life without a guide. My guardians, anxious to be rid of a troublesome charge, despatched me to a public school, thence to college, and so considered their responsibility ended. I was rich, therefore no one warned me of the dangerous companionship and reckless riot that so often wreck a student's life. Yet at two and twenty, I had no greater sin on my conscience than even one as pure as Miss Aldair might have easily forgiven. Then came the folly, alas, the crime, which has left a cloud upon my life that I know will never pass away. I became acquainted with a poor and beautiful girl. She learned to love me, I never sought, never consciously encouraged it, yet she loved me. I saw her, so young and delicate, surrounded with the drunken vulgarity of a pothouse, and I pitied her. In time she grew familiar with me, and then I knew she loved me. Such companionship could not come to good, I saw the danger and tried to escape. But the toils were around me. I had become the one hope and pleasure of her life; there was no retreat. Yet I made one desperate effort. I cast her from my arms and fled to France. The next day I found her at my side, braving scorn and shame for me, prepared to follow barefoot through the world, amply rewarded by one poor caress.

"I soon awoke to the fact that I did not love the girl, had never loved her! Yet she was beautiful, and possessed many rare and attractive talents which I had not suspected. But her unrequited passion became a burden to me, and the presence of her beautiful, sad, but unreproachful face kindled a hell of remorse and despair in my heart. She saw my misery and struggled vainly to alleviate it by a thousand little grateful ways and kindnesses, and sweet loving words that only lashed my guilty conscience to a fiercer agony. At last, in an evil hour, she left me, not in anger, or jealousy, but in simple, resolute kindness, and pity. Oh, she would have died to see me happy, and I, wretch that I was, felt so relieved by her absence that I sent her money—enough to keep her all her days and fled.

"But my sin followed me, her kind, loving, pitiful face

haunted me day and night, driving me on to worse despair and unrest. After two years of misery I hastened back to England, resolved to seek out the poor victim of my folly, and render such reparation as I still deemed I had the power to render by marrying her. I found her a favourite actress on the London stage, courted and admired by the great and gay. But, alas, the money I had sent her two years before never reached her, and cruel want and despair had consummated the ruin my folly had begun. Another man stood in my place, the door of repentance was closed, and there was no return for her or me. Despairing of rest and peace I gave myself up to drink, and gambling, and worse, seeking anyhow to smother the fire that burned in my guilty bosom. Year after year went by, but brought no rest, till, at last, I shall never forget that night, a fair girl's face looked pitifully upon me, and I thought I saw in the kind eyes, something that bade me hope again. For the first time in my life I felt the power of an honest love. Daily it grew, and my old evil habits dropped off one by one, and my heart grew calm, I was a man again.

"I never told my love, for by my love to her, I now measured the strength of another's to me, and I lived in hope a day would yet come when I might give my name to the woman I had wronged. And it came. But my proffered reparation was rejected, almost with scorn rejected, and I am now free to offer my unworthy hand to her who has my heart. Miss Aldair, my future rests with you. Is it beneath your regard, you who are so good, to bless and perhaps redeem a life that lives but in your love."

There were tears in Alaric's voice, as he ceased speaking, and there were tears in Emily's deep blue eyes, and her pretty dimpled lips quivered as though they fain would speak the pity and sorrow written in her face. Pity and sorrow, only that. The strong passionate face of the man looked earnestly down into the face of the gentle girl. But neither in her tearful eyes, nor in wondering, childlike lips, nor in the blush that glowed crimson to her forehead, was there reflected one faintest tint of the passion burning in his own.

She spoke no word, and Alaric needed none. He rose quietly, and stood bending over her; again the careless handsome face, again the lazy scorn on his lips, the half contemptuous smile sleeping in the depths of his keen black

eyes; again the glorious heroic form the little wondering girl had first seen and admired and feared a year ago, as he had stood beside her stern, terrible sire, and dwarfed even him to littleness. There remained no passion in his face, no quivering touch or voice, as he laid his hand on her shoulder, saying cheerfully,—

“Forgive me if anything I have said has caused you pain. I should have known that the pure heart of a girl sets her above the thoughts and passions of worldlings such as I. They are like the troubled water that would embrace the lily, but only toss it a little nearer Heaven, and rage to rest while the flower unsullied smiles above it still. Think no more on my folly. Let us end the day merrily as we began it. One disappointment more or less is not much in a life, and this I had anticipated. Make me happy to-day by being so.”

With a light step he bounded down the path, and next minute was busy embarking his crews with the old gay smile on his face, and the old clear ring in his voice, while Philip Celini was leading Emily down the hill.

It was a pretty sight to see Philip's glad face as he descended the hill with lovely Emily leaning so trustfully on his arm, looking down so thoughtfully at the lengthened shadows on the grass, looking up so lovingly into her escort's eyes. Did no thought of the gallant Alaric flit among those evening gleams that fell across the winding path? Was there in all that golden glory overspreading the western sky no shade to cast a gloom upon their way?

Why should there be? Who, in the triumphant hour of victory, amid the noise of the peeling of the bells, the crash of cannon, and the wild exultation of the swaying crowd, bestows one thought upon the brave who are lying yet unburied on the field? Who, when the race is won, and the glittering leaves of the laurel crown are clustering round the victor's head, looks back to mark the graves of those who fell unheeded on the road?

Pass on victorious Philip, pass on happy Emily! to your merry companions who wait at the foot of the hill wondering why you are tarrying so long; for the gold is fading out of the west, the stars are peeping from a sky that is streaked with gathering clouds, the night is coming on.

CHAPTER XXI.

FAILURE OF COTTON AND CO.

THE next evening brought the news that Cotton and Co. had failed.

Great as was the surprise manifested by the general public at the event, it was not altogether unexpected in commercial circles. For several years the operations of the firm had been much restricted, and during the last twelve months it had circulated an amount of questionable paper that could only be accounted for on the hypothesis of direst necessity or the reckless trading of a falling house. Indeed, Cotton and Co. were doomed two years ago when, on the death of Mr. Macklin, the junior partner, his executors insisted on withdrawing £10,000 in order to clear up certain private obligations which the deceased had unfortunately contracted. It was not to be supposed that £10,000 would be seriously missed from a firm of the magnitude of Cotton and Co. But the truth was the house had run itself so close that when the money was demanded at seven days' notice it had not an available balance of a shilling. Cotton, who had always showed himself a bad financier, to meet the exigency indiscreetly contracted a loan at high interest with a private banker under the strict seal of secrecy. Next week came failure after failure. Rumour got abroad that Macklins were heavily hit. Enquiries were set on foot, and their bankers hearing of the secret loan withdrew their support, and Robert Cotton, the sole surviving partner, was a doomed man. But he fought bravely to the last and had his discretion been commensurate with his courage and energy he might even now have pulled through, at least such was the opinion of many who were cognizant of his affairs, but for the rotten bills. It was just when he was flattering himself that the danger was past that there came a sudden panic, the suspected paper was refused by the banks and Cotton was up a tree. The very morning of his failure he had said good bye to Mary with unusual cheerfulness, little dreaming of the sad greeting that the evening would bring.

There is no class which has a deeper love of home than that of the wealthy British merchant. It is true he is a little fond of the too ostentatious display of his domestic comforts; but that only adds to his calamity when by the mischances of commerce he happens to lose it. There were many homes besides Robert Cotton's made desolate by his failure. There were young newly-married tradesmen just beginning life, full of hope and courage, strong middle-aged men with buxom wives and children round them, respectable old men with grown sons and daughters, to whom the failure of Macklin and Cotton meant ruin and dismay. Yet not one, perhaps, was so much to be pitied as he whose indiscretion or carelessness was the cause of their misery. They had never known the pleasures of refinement and affluence, their daughters had not spent their lives in learning and displaying useless accomplishments. They had earned their little elevation to citizenship by persevering industry; they had only to commence again in the old way. At worst a tradesman to a shopman or clerk was not so terrible a fall for the young, and from the harassing cares of a needy shopkeeper to the workhouse or the grave was not so great a calamity for the old. But Robert Cotton, Esq., of Summerville Lodge, and Mary, that delicately nurtured white-handed young lady—What would become of them?

It was near six o'clock on that fatal day, and Mary and Emily Aldair, who was now almost a resident of Summerville Lodge, were in the drawing-room dressed for dinner; once or twice Mary peered through the shutters into the dull September night. In a few minutes she should hear the sound of Papa's brougham rumbling up the quiet road and his step on the gravel walk. Emily was also peeping out rather anxiously now and then, but it was for a lighter footstep she was listening. Signor Philip Celini was expected to-night, in sooth he was expected very often and he came as often as he was expected.

The marble dial chimed the half-hour and Mr. Cotton had not arrived, nor Philip Celini.

"How loud the wind roars," said Mary, glancing up from an album she had been fingering for the last half-hour, "and how dark it grows. I hope Papa has not met with an accident. James is a careless driver."

"e, dear," replied Emily, crossing the room and
by her friend. "Mr. Cotton will be home in a
the roads are bad and he will most likely walk
Isn't that last sketch of Signor Celini handsome,

t so, to you, dear; but I think this old silhouette of
h more prepossessing. What a noble expression
d how well that sad smile of his becomes him.
ou will never have such another lover as this."
ear," replied Emily, with a shy smile, "that now
with him he would transfer his affections to you ?
; they would be long unrequited."

ushed at this sally it passed unobserved by Emily,
intently focussing a small pencilled portrait of a
some boy. Nevertheless Mary looked very guilty,
on her seat at the piano, she executed a brilliant
fantasia, which ended, she struck a few soft
ords, and sang a little song which Signor Celini
d enough to set to music.

First love is like the star of day
That trembles in the dawning,
A moment smiles and dies away
In laughing light of morning.

The snowdrop vaunts her vernal leaves,
And bares her bosom's whiteness ;
But when she dies no garden grieves,
But blooms in greater brightness.

The tender flowers of spring must fade
Before the summer's coming ;
The violet dies within the shade
E'er yet the rose is blooming.

was hardly ended when there came a loud knock-
or, followed by the sound of alarmed voices in the
mily caught the words:—"Water, he has fainted.
o's voice and, rushing to the stairs, she saw Mr.
; resting white and ghastly on her lover's knee.
n had stood on the doorstep listening to Mary's
ce, and when it ended the thought how that was

the last song that would ever be sung in the old home overcame the stout heart that till now had never known to quail before the ills of life. He felt his courage and his strength waning, and obeying the childlike faith that comes to us all in the hour of dire calamity, he lifted his face towards the dark starless sky and prayed. And God had taken pity on him and granted him a respite to his sorrow. They brought him into the drawing-room, but it was long before he regained sufficient consciousness to unbosom his sad news. Then, having briefly announced the catastrophe, he buried his face in his hands, and rocked himself to and fro, quite heedless of the tender caresses of Mary and Emily, and the brave, hopeful words of Philip Celini. Emily, always impulsive, at last broke down in her affected cheerfulness, and retiring to the farthest corner of the room stood sobbing hysterically, while Philip held her hand, conveying by his touch the sympathy and love his tongue refused to speak. But Mary sat still at her father's side, with her arm round his neck, as she had sat from the first; she had long dried her silent tears, but her thoughtful womanly wisdom told her that the sound of her loved voice could only recall him to a keener sense of his misery. All the higher sympathies are silent, her soft warm arm wound so lovingly round him brought more consolation and peace than volumes of kind words.

"Father," said Mary, her soft cooing voice breaking silence at last, "Father, we have forgotten something. Mr. Celini and Emily are our guests, and dinner is waiting."

Mr. Cotton raised his head. "Yes, yes, my child, you are right," he said. "We will be hospitable while we can. Tomorrow is not ours."

"That's my dear, brave papa," cried Mary, kissing the deeply-furrowed face.

"Forgive me, Mr. Celini, misfortune should not have made me forgetful of others, since I think prosperity never did."

Philip passed to his side and took the good man's hand. "Excuse me, sir," he faltered, "I am not so thoughtless as to obtrude my poor sympathy between you and those who love you most. I owe much to your kindness already. Pray try, for the sake of your daughter, for the sake of all who love you, to be strong, and hope the best. The loss of fortune should

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so rich in love. Good-bye, sir, good-bye, Miss
bye, Emily."

was spoken almost in a whisper, and the poor
wretched creature heeded the unwarrantable liberty.

"Do not leave us," she pleaded, throwing her arms
round Philip's neck, "Do not leave them."

He brushed back the wild hair from her brow. He gazed
long and earnestly into her tearful eyes, then gently removing
her hands he escaped from the room.

At the point of breaking down and he will rather leave
her to her tear to our misery, she thought. Kind good

He descended the stairs with the old light step, and
as he passed behind him she thought—what will not a
—we shall never meet in Mr. Cotton's house
never again anywhere in the world.

(To be continued.)



ENGLISH MEN OF LETTERS.

No. III.—SPENSER.

ONE of the most notable facts in literary English history is the appearance, in 1579, of an anonymous poem entitled "The Shepherds Kalender." It was dedicated, like Gosson's "School of Abuse" (which had such a fertile result) to that prince of knights, Sir Philip Sidney. In speaking, in the "Apologie for Poetrie," of the English poets down to his own time, Sidney points to the writings of Chaucer and the "Mirror of Magistrates" as noteworthy products of English genius and energy; commending, too, as he passes along, the "Liricks" of the Earl of Surrey, in which, he says, there are "many things of a noble birth and worthy of a noble minde." In reference to Chaucer he pays a tribute and passes a criticism that both deserve notice, first as indicating the true critical spirit, and secondly as expressing a cultured man's mistrust of his own time. "Chaucer," the critic proceeds, "undoubtedly did excellently in his *Troylus and Cresseid*; of whom, truly I know not whether to marvel more, either that he in that mistie time could see so clearely, or that wee in this cleare age walke so stumblingly after him." Sidney was thus not satisfied that all that could be done for English poetry, for a century and a half previous to the time at which he was writing, had been done by men like Hoccleve, Hawes, and Skelton; while his compliment to the Earl of Surrey is not much higher than Dr. Johnson's, touching the Earl of Roscommon, to the effect that "he wrote very well for a gentleman." Perhaps, indeed, Sidney might have been a little more enthusiastic over his noble predecessor had it not been that he too was anxious, as Surrey had been, to reform English verse. But in his enthusiastic youth Sir Philip thought of recurring to the manner of the ancients, and he and Spenser used to supplement each other's efforts towards

that consummation. It is not difficult to see what were the models admired at the time, when we find these sentences following in direct sequence those already quoted from the "Apologie":—"The *Sheapheards Kalendar* hath much poetry in his Eglogues: indeed worthy the reading if I be not deceived. That same framing of his style to an old rustic language I dare not alowe, sith neyther Theocritus in Greeke, Virgill in Latine, nor Sanazar in Italian did affect it." Of course, this may simply mean that the famous writers of pastoral, already known to the world, had used the language of their own time, but it also shows that the critic was not quite sure whether there was one form of English that might be used for poetical purposes. It is clear that Sidney felt astonishment, rather than admiration, when he thought of Chaucer, and that it had never entered his mind as a possibility that Chaucer's language might be looked on as the standard of poetical English. Spenser himself probably had this notion: he considered he could not approach Chaucer too closely, whether in sentiment or form. So, too, his apologist E.K. (now known to have been Edward Kirke) defends the words of the "Calendar" on the ground that though "they be something hard and of most men unused" they are at the same time "English, and also used of most excellent Authors and most famous Poets." This much it seems indispensable to grant in reference to Spenser's idea of his poetic art and of what was due to his Master, Chaucer. Affectation alone is not a sufficient reason for his preference of archaisms. There is no doubt much that is artificial in all his work, but in this particular feature of diction it is evident that he is acting on a well considered theory, and that criticism was not likely to have much effect on his choice. It would have shown greater strength of character in Spenser, perhaps, had he boldly used the language of his own time; but then his strength of character might have been apparent at the expense of his poetic excellence. Sidney, we shall say, was on this point right for the critic; but Spenser knew himself and his art better, and he went his own way. It is not likely that there are many true students of the "Shepherd's Calendar" and the "Faerie Queene," who would prefer the language to be other than what it is, and this not so much because they

have conquered the difficulties connected with it, as because they find it suitable to the poet's idiosyncrasy. Spenser in Elizabethan English would no longer be the Spenser that has influenced all English poets from his own day to this.

Dean Church, in discussing the "Shepherd's Calendar" in his recent monograph on Spenser, has the clear ring of genuine appreciation along with the doubt as to the propriety of the diction selected. Here we find, he says, "for the first time in the century, the swing, the command, the varied resources of the real poet, who is not driven by failing language or thought into frigid or tumid absurdities." It is not quite patent why there should be supposed to exist an inseparable connection between "failing language" and "frigid or tumid absurdities." If Spenser had been capable of absurdities it is not likely that words of any kind would have saved him from the perpetration of them, and his success with the language he did use is ample proof of his own clear insight into propriety, and of his moulding and adapting power. There is this difference between the eccentricity of Spenser and that of Wordsworth in reference to diction, that (as E.K. points out) Spenser was doing what acknowledged great poets had done before him, whereas Wordsworth was striving to achieve what had never been thought of, and what (as he must have known himself) would come with all the suddenness and shock of an innovation. Spenser's choice of words was a revival rather than a novelty. Probably his attitude finds its best parallel in this generation in that of Mr. William Morris, who has also declared boldly for a diction not quite in accordance with that used by his contemporaries. In any case, Spenser's language does not prevent the "Shepherd's Calendar" from being the first of a new kind of poetry, and so forming a landmark in English literature. Sir Philip Sidney acknowledged the "sinew" there is in it, and nothing could be better than this latest tribute to the excellence of the work from the pen of Dean Church :—

"There are passages in the "Shepherd's Calendar" of poetical eloquence, of refined vigour, and of musical and imaginative sweetness, such as the English language had never attained to, since the days of him, who was to the age of Spenser, what Shakespeare and Milton are to ours, the pattern and fount of poetry, Chaucer."

Once more, then, after an interval of one hundred and , during which Englishmen and thinkers had not ough their activities had been other than literary, d fibre and original resource had arisen, to mould res into new forms, and to send his influence down ations of poets. We must be careful, however, y acknowledging this, not to underrate the prede- penser, who were no doubt inferior to him in point it who, nevertheless, prepared the way for him and ight him not a little. Dean Church has small h the pastoral in allegorical form, and it is pro- hat account that he mentions only Alexander helping to transfer the influence of Clement Spenser. No account of the English pastoral ry which makes no mention of Henryson's d Makyne" and the anonymous "Harpalus," to omit Barnaby Googe in speaking of the pastoral. Opinions may differ as to the validity of composition, but it is impossible to ignore it e elements of English verse, and, that being so, ould be given to Barnaby Googe as a predecessor

His collection of "Eclogues, Epitaphs, and ppeared about sixteen years before the "Shep- idar," the Eclogues in some points, both as to nd spirit, being anticipatory of Spenser's work. le effort to detect a likeness between a poem erds, which develops (as Googe's third eclogue n allegory on the Marian persecution, and another r a slight disguise, deals with the ecclesiastical t gather round the name of Archbishop Grindal. to see the drift, and to admire the poetic of this:—

This Coridon, come from the cart,
in honour chief doth sit,
And governs us : because he hath
a crabbed clownish wit.
Now see the churlish cruelty
that in his heart remains :
The silly sheep that shepherds good
have fostered up with pains,

And brought away, from stinking dales
on pleasant hills to feed :
O cruel clownish Coridon
O cursed carlish seed :
The simple sheep constrained he
their pasture sweet to leave,
And to their old corrupted grass
enforceth them to cleave,
Such sheep, as would not them obey
but in their pasture bide,
With cruel flames they did consume,
and vex on every side.

It is worthy of note that the long line which Googe, as we see, divides into two for the convenience of his page, becomes with Spenser two separate lines, and thus the movement is brightened and the general effect is richer. With that explanation, let us now look at a short passage from the seventh eclogue of the "Shepherd's Calendar," if only to convince ourselves that Spenser is not so very far from Barnaby Googe after all.

My seely sheep like well below
They need not melampode ;
For they been hale enough, I trow,
And liken their abode.
But if they with thy goats should yede,
They soon might be corrupted ;
Or like not of the frouzy fede,
Or with the weeds be glutted.
The hills where dwelled holy saints,
I reverence and adore ;
Not for themself but for the saints
Which have been dead of yore.
And now they been to heaven forewent,
Their good is with them go ;
Their sample only to us lent,
That als we mought do so.

That Googe was a predecessor of Spenser, and that his allegorical eclogues are worthy of consideration in every statement regarding the introduction of that class of poetry into the English language, may be, and indeed is, perfectly true, and yet it may be equally true that Spenser learned little or nothing from the "Eclogues, Epitaphs, and Sonnets." But Spenser was an enormous reader, and one of the first

scholars among English poets. There is evidence also, in his red works, to show that he had little hesitation, (speare and Milton after him) in using the work of aterial for his own purpose. In any case, it is

Mr. Arber has pointed out in the preface to his iooqe's poems, to be able to note the continuity poetry, as represented by these eclogues of a s, whose true merit is comparatively little known. de the allegorical eclogue famous by these twelve o which he introduced the leading features that racterize his best and strongest verse. He para- itates, practices effects of metre and melody, d moralizes; thereby proving himself a close social, ecclesiastical, and political life, but chiefly s power of varied musical expression, his rare f numbers and mellifluous harmonies. One has k to the lyric in which he sings the praises of the ee that a poet with quite new power of moulding English words had begun to express himself. ells upon the nymphs of a neighbouring brook to r celebrating the rare qualities of the "queen of s all."

Of fayre Elisa be your silver song,
That blessed wight
The flowre of Virgins : may shee florish long
In princely plight !
For shee is Syrinx daughter without spotte,
Which Pan, the shepheards god, of her begot :
So sprong her grace
Of heavenly race,
No mortall blemishe may her blotte.

e second and the fifth we get, in the tales of und the Brier," and the "Fox and the Kid," good that narrative power which was yet to assume did proportions. In all this we find the poet his aim is to point out, not what he really finds but what he fancies a poetical world might be, if ume progress of sublimation were possible. Dean ot quite sure that Spenser was right in taking up e. He is impatient of his unreality, cannot see s not sometimes step forward and speak in his own

character. "He never threw himself frankly," says Dean Church, "on human life as it is; he always viewed it through a veil of mist which greatly altered its true colours, and often distorted its proportions." Is not this to read Spenser the wrong way? And is it not true that Spenser takes human conditions and tries whether it is not possible to expand and ennoble them, till they shall become pleasing ideals, at once romantic and elevating? This we find in the poet's early work, as it is conspicuous as the leading feature of the "Faerie Queene."

Before fairly settling down to his masterpiece, it would seem that Spenser had experimented with dramatic work. There is evidence to show that he had written nine comedies, but of these (at least in their original form), there is not a trace now. Probably we have not lost much in the destruction of these tentative efforts, for though it may be inferred that Spenser in such compositions would try to comprehend something of the meaning of practical activity, there is little likelihood that he would be successful or consistent in his treatment. In regard to these comedies, Dean Church is disposed to express some regret, and all he allows himself to say, after considering the fact that Spenser determined for allegory rather than drama, and in time produced the "Faerie Queene," is, "We cannot repine at a decision which gave us such a product." Of course, there is no room for repining; nobody is forced to read the poem against his will, and half-hearted appreciation is altogether out of the question. Why, forsooth, should there even be a hint at repining? Is the burden of life such a pleasant thing to contemplate in bare realistic outline that we should prefer it to everything else, and should rejoice only in the poet who is most successful in giving a faithful portraiture of what he finds about him? There is a sphere, too, for fancy to disport herself in, as well as there is a sphere for the exercise of intellectual vigour and homiletic appeal. Surely all human possibilities are not limited by the rule of thumb and the strict decisions of the multiplication table. Even Milton could rejoice in the stories he found in Chaucer in his youth, and would fain have had more of

. him that left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold.

allowed that society is the better for the fairies and children find pleasant to the taste, and to their spiritual energies. Tom the Piper's son of development, important in his own degree, as is in his; and Jack the Giant-killer is a powerful Hercules. It was not merely a whim of Spenser into allegory; even the most direct writing he showed that his power lay in giving the rein to constructing intricate romance.

In each group his leading objections to the "Faerie Queene" fall under three main heads: (1) Imperfect art, (2) language, and (3) Exaggeration, diffuseness, and that the "Faerie Queene" was the product of a time that may be quite true, but should not that be a matter of admiration rather than our censure? Indeed, it implies this when he says:—"Even genius, for the gifts of time. It cannot forerun the future of its day, nor anticipate the conquests and possessions of the future. Things are impossible to great masters of art which are easy to their successors." All this is admirable, and what is said is also true, namely, that Spenser might have seen the model poems of antiquity, and even in the Italian stories in verse which he must have read, that it was a matter of a clear head and well-managed art to be what "they made their story, as it unfolded itself, more or less skilful devices, all that needed to be their beginnings." Nothing could be better for the great matters of Epic poetry, but it is not the point as regards Spenser. Had it been an epic that a poet was attempting, he was scholar enough, and his ardent enthusiasm for the artificial part of poetical art would not have been a fault. To know all that Dean Church says regarding the merits of his predecessors. His plan may have been probably it was, too vast to be overtaken, but no doubt that had it been worked out according to his plan, it would have been not only self-interpreting, but a glorious monument of poetical enterprise. The books, however, were published by themselves, and it is enough that they were not quite an open secret. It

was in reference to these that the letter to Raleigh was written, explaining (at Raleigh's request) "The general intention and meaning, which in the whole course thereof I have fashioned, without expressing of any particular purposes, or by accidents, therein occasioned." There is little doubt, however, that Spenser was wrong (if he had an epical intention) in his design to keep all the explanation to the twelfth book, and the only escape from that position is to say that the intention was not epical, in the strict sense of that term. For how could it possibly be, when the subject was confessedly the realm of Faery? One might as well strive to regulate the course of a dream, or to limit the movements of an ærial female on a broomstick. Spenser himself, though perhaps in his admiration for Virgil he may have thought of arms and a hero after leaving eclogues, must have felt as he proceeded that his indefinite subject precluded strict epical plan, and so have allowed himself to chase his fancies. Once more, we are brought round to think of youthful enthusiasts over their luxury of fairy tales, and to conclude that there never has been for grown readers an enchanter like Edmund Spenser. And this fairly disposes of a minor objection under this head which Dean Church feels bound to state. "Adventures," he says, "begin, which have no finish. Actors in them drop from the clouds, claim an interest, and we ask in vain what has become of them." This is to look upon Spenser from the point of view of the schools, whereas we should feel when under his influence all the delightful remoteness, waywardness, and aimlessness of a lengthened holiday. It would not be an elevating spectacle to see a portly citizen hunting butterflies, nor though a man may find himself a fool at forty, would it look very well that he should take to paper kites and bird-nesting. Still, there may be intellectual relaxation for middle age as well as for boyhood, and there may be a bracing sphere of activity apart from the "school for adults." Why may not Spenser allure us away from our selfishness and our jealousies—away from the chase after wealth and honours—away from ordinary routine and common pleasures, and make us feel there is a region of beauties and wonders, where virtue is very beautiful and vice very hideous by comparison, even if he has little

definite plan in the scheme of his entertainment? We are not with him to criticize but to be delighted; we feel that this is a land in which nobody produces line or level, and into which no pioneer of civilization and science may ever hope to set a foot!

A litle lowly Hermitage it was,
Down in a dale, hard by a forest's side,
Far from resort of people that did pas
In traveill to and froe : a little wyde
There was an holy chappell edifyde,
Wherein the Hermite dewly wont to say
His holy thinges each morne and eventyde :
Thereby a christall streame did gently play,
Which from a sacred fountaine welled forth alway.

In the region where such a choice spot is to be found there is no place for criticism. The poet may do with us what he chooses—put us on rocking-horses, confine us in caves, toss us in blankets, or what-not—and we answer him never a word. The poem, being unfinished, cannot be fairly judged of as to plan, and even had it been complete the probability is that it would have been enjoyable mainly in parts, and not as a whole. Even were there no allegory, the poetic beauty of separate scenes and incidents would arrest and hold the attention. It needs no skilful plot or well ordered development to help the appreciation of such delightful remoteness—as that of “The House of Morpheus,” which is

Wrapt in eternal silence, far from enemies ;
or the “Cave of Mammon,”

From whose rough vault the ragged breaches hung
Emboss'd with massy gold of glorious gift,
And with rich metal loaded every rift,
That heavy ruin they did seem to threat;

or the rich exuberance of the garden of Proserpina, with its silver seat, and the delicious arbour whose very mould and texture betoken the frequent presence of the majestic owner; or the weird and strange realism of the procession of Night and the Witch Duessa, whose awful steeds stamped only when they were irritated :

Then foaming tar, their bridles they would champ,
And trampling the fine element would fiercely ramp.

Could anything surpass the direct force, the reality and vivid

meaning of the lonely desolation depicted in the "Cave of Despair," over which Sir Philip Sidney is said to have gone into raptures?

And all about old stocks and stubs of trees,
Whereon nor fruit nor leaf was ever seen,
Did hang upon the ragged rocky knees,
On which had many wretches hangèd been,
Whose carcasses were scattered on the green,
And thrown about the clifts. Arrivèd there,
That bare-head knight, for dread and doleful teen,
Would fain have fled, nor durst approachen near,
But th' other forc'd him stay and comforted in fear.

That darksome cave they enter, where they find
That cursed man low sitting on the ground,
Musing full sadly in his sullen mind ;
His griesly locks, long grown and unbound,
Disordered hung about his shoulders round,
And hid his face through which the hollow eyne
Look'd deadly dull, and starèd as astound ;
His raw-bone cheeks, through penury and pine,
Were shrunk into his jaws, as he did never dine.

There is one stanza, in which Leigh Hunt delighted, which at once displays Spenser's remarkable power over melody, and affords a stately illustration of the poet's fairyland. Scholastic plan is utterly forgotten in reading of the ethereal harmony so inimitably reported here—the combination and successful blending of the sounds of birds, voices, instruments, winds, and waters.

The joyous birds, shrouded in cheerful shade,
Their notes unto the voice attemp'ed sweet:
Th' angelical, soft, trembling voices made
To th' instruments divine response meet;
The silver sounding instruments did meet
With the base murmur of the water's fall;
The water's fall, with difference discreet,
Now soft, now loud, unto the wind did call;
The gentle warbling wind low answerèd to all.

As Leigh Hunt has just been mentioned, it may not be out of place to close what has thus been said of Spenser's plan with a penetrating statement from him bearing on the subject.

"Although," he says, "it is to be no more expected of
 to read him through at once, than to wander days
 in a forest, thinking of nothing else, yet any true
 poetry, when he comes to know him, would as soon
 to repose on the summer grass. You may get up
 away, but will return next day at noon to listen to his
 and to see 'with half-shut eye,' his visions of knights
 and his gods and goddesses, whom he brought
 down to earth in immortal beauty."

is necessary, in reference to Dean Church's objections
 to his diction, to add anything to what was said in
 of the "Shepherd's Calendar," nor will it be
 on us to discuss at any length the charge of
 extravagance, &c., after having spoken at large of the charm
 of Spenser's fanciful waywardness. The poet of the
 "Faerie Queene" was undoubtedly the man of his age who
 lost in the luxury of poetical words and fancies. He
 went on in framing a vocabulary, as well as a poetic
 style, to suit his own purposes. It was an age in which
 there was very fluctuating, and Spenser took full advantage
 of existing conditions; and it was an age in which
 men were studious of manifold effects, and nobody nearly
 so fastidious as Spenser in producing these. Dean Church is struck
 by the contrast there is between the poet's extremes, and
 is that anybody who had such a delicate appreciation
 should also have been capable of producing pictures
 which seem meant to turn our stomach." Undoubtedly, it is
 very hard to get over a description such as that of Error,
 the "damned wights" in Hades. But it must be
 remembered that in this also Spenser was true to poetical
 idealism and true, besides, to the instinct of his time. As
 has been pointed out, there were doubtless many Greeks
 who thus tempted the extremes of artistic depiction,
 as Homer and Dante—both remarkable for style and
 content—had gone as far as Spenser. Is it unfair to
 put in connection with these, Milton's terrible picture
 of Death? And as to the sensual parts of the
 "Faerie Queene," we can only fall back again upon the fact
 that in the land of Faery the poet introduces us to, and that
 the contrasts drawn are sufficient counterbalance to one

another. In fact, without his extremes the poet could not possibly reach the idealism that forms his supreme characteristic, nor could he come so close to his readers as he does.

In connexion with this question of exaggeration, Dean Church takes occasion to condemn the adulation of Queen Elizabeth that was common to Spenser with the literary men of the time. The Dean waxes wroth at the very thought of it, and characterizes it pithily "as gross, shameless, lying flattery." Then, too, she was such a Queen, a perfect Tartar in fact, and many of those that flattered knew perfectly well that in their heart of hearts they sincerely wished they might say just the opposite. So the Dean implies, for he has no patience with such men in their cringing to such a woman. She was "able, indeed, high-spirited, successful, but ungrateful to her servants, capricious, vain, ill-tempered, unjust, and, in her old age, ugly." What could it all mean? Well, it was the chivalry of the time, and if the Queen was a termagant, and ugly to boot when old, it made little difference in the question of doing honour to an ideal. Moreover, there had never been cavaliers of that description before; there had never been a Queen like Elizabeth, who was even a lyric poet despite her bad qualities; and it was the last great opportunity of being chivalrous in public.

There was never such a nation,
Never, never, such a Queen!

It is time to draw to a close, and it is pleasant to be able to do it with a note of praise. Though there are features in Spenser's work which the Dean of St. Paul's would seem to underrate, and others, perhaps, to which he does not attach the value that would appear to be their due, there cannot be a doubt of his thorough knowledge of Spenser's writings—a knowledge that is quite exceptional at the present time—and of his acute criticisms and appreciation of what has sterling worth. Readers must go to the book and find for themselves what he says of Spenser's "quaint stateliness," the "beauty and melody of his numbers," and "the intrinsic nobleness of his general aim." Dean Church may find fault with what

he takes to be defects or flaws in his author, and in such judgment it may be allowed to differ from him, but no dissent is possible from what he admires, and nothing but praise can be bestowed upon his expansive method and his beautiful style. What he says of the minor poems is so good that the *Spenser* would have wished more of the same. It is a true sign of the true Spenserian when we find him say that "our pleasant Willy," in "The Tears of the Virgin," is Sidney and not Shakespeare, and it is another sign of intimate knowledge and quick penetration that he believes in Spenser's humour and his satirical power. It is one sturdy testimony the more to the vitality there of the "poets' poet," and to the lasting and inexhaustible life of that gathers about those themes of old romance

That made him pipe so merrily as never none.

THOMAS BAYNE.





WHAT WILL SOCIETY SAY?

A NOVEL.

By MERVYN MERRITON.

Author of "Romances of the Chivalric Ages," "The Ringwoods of Ringwood," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXV.

THOUGH full of ardour and impetuosity, Juliana was yet wanting in calm resolution. Unless she took on the spur of the moment any step she had resolved to take, there was something more than a possibility that she might not take it at all. Conscious of this herself, she decided, on rising in the morning, to broach the subject of her engagement to Frank with her mother in the course of the forenoon.

Mrs. Leadstone had a bad temper of the very worst description of bad tempers. She was not a woman, like some, to explode violently, smash all right and left, then in a short time forget both cause and effect of her anger, neither was she one of those women who sulk, and nurse their wrath to keep it warm; but once having taken up a position against anybody or anything, she never entirely abandoned that position. If circumstances became absolutely too strong for her, she would acquiesce in them, perhaps, even, without any further open opposition, but with the *arrière pensée* of a secret grudge to be fed very fat against some individual who had become obnoxious to her in connection with these circumstances.

Of course this was not the view which Juliana took of her mother's temper; not only was it too dark to be co-existent with the real affection she bore that parent, but its appreciation demanded a keener insight into human nature than she could be expected to possess.

"I shall have a scene with my mother as a matter of course," was her thought on the subject; "she'll be angry, won't spare my poor Frank, will try to shake my resolutions. I shall stand firm, not lose my temper—at least I hope so. Her recon-

with Frank will be the work of time, but it will be come at last, and she'll end by loving him for my

Laying this flattering unction to her soul, she ad- to the attack as soon after breakfast as she could secure adstone by herself, in the boudoir.

nma, dear," she began, her heart beating violently, : something very particular to say to you."

eed, my love?"

as half inclined to speak to my fa—to papa, but ject seems of a nature that should in the first : be talked over between us."

meaning you and me, dearest?"

ween you and me."

you say it's something very 'important?" Here adstone surveyed her daughter penetratively through ble gold eye-glass which she used for reading small ough in point of fact she knew as well as you who I who write, this, what was in that daughter's mind, : about to be shaped into words by that daughter's t this was her mode of preparing to receive the attack.

y, very important indeed, it is, Mamma. I have taken hich—"

you have *taken* it, eh? I rather imagined you were consult me before taking it, whatever it may happen But if the step is taken, just tell me what it is, and 'e done with it. I shouldn't wonder if you had ordered iage, or asked Luttrell for some particular dish, to ne of the gentlemen, or promised to ride somewhere first consulting me. Come, make haste! I have yet rs to write."

y, mamma, dear, don't joke in that way about serious ous!"

nma, the step I allude to is one on which my whole fe depends."

d gracious! That does sound serious. But I dare -like, you're exaggerating some molehill into a moun- nyhow be quick and out with it."

nma, I,—I, have engaged myself to—"

"Some ball or another, eh?"

"This is really unkind, mamma!"

"My sweet child! I unkind! unkind to the being dearest to me on earth, whose happiness is the one object of my existence! What means that reproach?"

"Oh, mamma! I reproach you! No, no! I only meant that you *might* attribute more weight than you did to the words I used."

"Well well, I'll hold my tongue till you've finished; only pray speak to the point."

Thus urged, Juliana spoke unmistakeably to the point, saying, deliberately, "My engagement is for life. I have promised to marry."

"Marry! marry!" with which exclamation Mrs. Leadstone sprang up theatrically from her chair.

"Yes, mamma, to marry Frank Aylesmere."

"Marry—Surely I did not hear aright—You said—?"

"Frank Aylesmere."

"Is this possible?"

"It is true."

"So then, Mr. Francis Aylesmere has forgotten himself to the extent of drawing from an unsuspecting and too confiding girl a consent of this solemn nature, without first deigning to address himself to her parents! It is thus that he abuses our hospitality. But surely, my child, you don't imagine any such absurd engagement that you may have entered into on your own responsibility is be considered binding on us, your parents! Ha! ha! ha! Too ridiculous indeed! Positively amusing! Mr. Francis Aylesmere's poor weak head must have been turned by the study of his Juliets, Ophelias, Mirandas and Rosalinds, and he thinks to introduce his stage nonsense into real life. My darling, it is indeed fortunate you spoke to me instead of to your father, poor, good, soft-hearted creature! There's no saying what mess he might have led us into. But never mind, leave all to me, I'll manage to get you out of this wretched business. There, silly child, now don't excite yourself; you'll only be upset and ill, and then I should not wonder if you were to make me ill too!"

For Juliana, confounded by her mother's audacity and aplomb, hurt by the absence of all sympathy for her own feel

ings, and unable to get in a word of remonstrance, had found relief for her mental struggle in a flood of tears.

It was Mrs. Leadstone's policy to avoid all argument with Juliana until she could ascertain, not so much her husband's view of the matter—that she pretty well guessed—as whether any reasonable hope existed of inducing him to alter it. In furtherance of such policy she hastened, before Juliana had sufficiently recovered her self-possession for speech, to say with maternal unction. “My own loved one, you are—like myself—now too much agitated to continue this discussion. Give me a short time to recover from the shock my nerves have sustained. You cannot doubt my having your true interests at heart. Indeed what else can I regard more on earth? By and by we will resume this conversation, and then—” Here heavy footsteps were heard in the passage without.—“Your papa I declare—Surely he—”

“I think Frank has already spoken to him,” Juliana said boldly, and smiling with a triumphant air inspired by the prospect of her father's arrival to her rescue.

Mrs. Leadstone frowned. She felt that she was checkmated.

Mr. Leadstone, after knocking, entered at once. “Well, Juliana,” he began gaily, turning away from his wife, under pretence of seeking a chair, “so the great secret's out. What does mamma say?”

“It appears to matter very little what she says or what she feels,” Mrs. Leadstone thrust in, “and still less what you say or think. I see a combined manœuvre has been practised upon us. We are treated,”—with an angry glance at Juliana—“as an enemy; the plan has been to separate our forces, and attack us in detail at the same moment. Now, Mr. Leadstone,”—he had laughed,—“if you please, let us be serious. Sit down and tell me what Mr. Aylesmere has been saying to you, or to speak more particularly, what inducement he has held out to you to give him your daughter, and heiress! I say *and* heiress, for, Ha! ha! ha,”—with well assumed bitterness—“That's the main point with Mr. Aylesmere, whatever romantic stuff it has suited him to pour into this poor child's ears. Now then, out with your story! I'm ready for it.”

“I see you are, my dear,” Leadstone said, getting redder than usual, and looking rather uncomfortable, for in point of

fact he had no more of a story to tell than had Canning's needy knife grinder. "I see you are. Well, the plain truth is we may talk ourselves black in the face, and we shan't get much beyond this, which is that our darling here,—our darling here—Bless her! Bless her!—has been and lost her dear little 'cart to a good and worthy young fellow, and a gentleman all over; that if we *don't* want to make her 'appy afore all else in life, we shall put our backs up about his 'avin no money, and if we *do*—which I 'umbly submit we ought to do—we shall just drop the subject o' 'money, and see how we can make matters as smooth as we can for both on 'em. Them's my sentiments, as somebody says somewhere."

"A truce with your vulgar jocosity, if you please, Mr. Leadstone."

"My dear, I withdraw the joke—consider it withdrawn; and please to give me your own sentiments, for well you know it would go agen' the grain with me to do anythink in opposition to your wishes."

"Ha! ha! ha! my wishes! Ha! ha! ha! Gracious Heavens!" Mrs. Leadstone almost shrieked out, laughing fiercely, "My wishes are very likely to be consulted. Don't play the hypocrite, sir! You know as well as I do the whole thing's a dark plot. This fool of a girl has all along relied on your support in opposition to my wishes for her proper settlement in life. I need hardly tell you what those wishes were. My fond, and I'm now made to see, foolish dream was that she should one day wear a coronet. Well well, be it as your band of conspirators, Berrington and Co., would have it! I give up the struggle. I'm overpowered by numbers. Let our daughter go with the—Ha! ha! ha!—man of her heart into poverty—love in lodgings—perhaps foreign exile! she'll one day learn that in following what she has been tutored to call the dictates of *her* heart she has broken *mine* by her cruel desertion!"

"But, Mamma dear," Juliana vainly attempted to interpose.

"Come, really my dear," Leadstone added with no better success.

"Silence both," cried Mrs. Leadstone, Leave me to my

wretchedness ! I want no discussion, you're two to one with ten more at your back, I don't attempt to oppose you. Imagine I've consented—if you wish to salve over your consciences—but consented with a protest."

"Indeed, mamma, I should wish—"

"Mrs. Leadstone, hear your daughter ! "

"No, no, no ; nothing more ; You've settled the match between you—forced a son-in-law upon me. On your heads be the consequences ! And now that you see there's no use prolonging the discussion, and that every additional word on this most painful theme is but another stab to my wounded affections, don't you think there is a gratuitous cruelty in your remaining ? If you don't, I do. Go ! in Heaven's name, go !" With which, the heartstricken mother and wife, sobbing hysterically, and rubbing her eyes (really unmoistened) with her embroidered handkerchief, flung herself on the sofa, her face averted from her daughter and husband.

Nothing remained for these latter but to retire in silence from this curious family encounter, not much elated by a victory obtained chiefly through the refusal of the foe to fight at all. Juliana, however, secretly rejoiced that, owing to the absence of discussion, she had not been drawn by her mother's taunts into using any intemperate language, while Tom Leadstone felt there was something gained in the fact that his wife, however ungraciously, had announced her intention of not actively opposing the marriage.

Frank, on hearing what had passed in Mrs. Leadstone's boudoir, decided, by the advice of the father, and with the daughter's consent, not to visit Lentworth for two or three days. It may be mentioned that, during this interval, Marie, informed by Juliana of the progress of events, availed herself of the opportunity presented, by an unexpectedly offered professional engagement, to terminate her visit before the time originally appointed ; thus when Frank did again make his appearance at Lentworth, he found that she and Oldham had departed.

Mrs. Leadstone had, in the meantime, acted to perfection the part of victim and martyr which she had thought fit to assume. She never mentioned Frank, or made the remotest allusion to the marriage, but she wore a resigned and tearful

look, at times clutching her daughter to her heart, and kissing her frantically, at others seizing Juliana's two hands, pressing them, holding her at a distance, gazing at her, then turning away with locked lips, as if some terrible thought lay deep in her soul, on which, though it was ever present to her, she dared not trust herself with speech.

Her interview with Frank, on the occasion of his first visit, at the expiration of two days, was a real piece of scenic effect. Even Frank himself could not resist the temptation to draw a little on his theatrical recollections, in the course of an encounter so utterly factitious and unreal. Indeed, some thing of the dramatic form will be that which will the best convey it to the readers' apprehension.

Scene. The principal drawing-room at Lentworth Hall.

Mrs. Leadstone and Juliana are discovered seated at work, and in silence.

The hall door bell rings. Juliana eyes the door of the room which leads to the hall anxiously. Mrs. Leadstone observes Juliana no less anxiously.

Mrs. L.: A visitor so early ! (*aside*) It is he ! Luttrell says they expect him this morning.

Juliana (aside) : It must be Frank ! Shall I remain ? I can't possibly meet him without letting him kiss me ! Perhaps that would be more than my mother could stand. I'll go ! (*Aloud, at first with desperate resolution, then with supplicating softness*) "Mamma, I believe Mr. Aylesmere is coming to see you. I intreat you to receive him kindly ! (*gradually approaching the door leading to the adjoining room*) Do ! do ! for the sake of the love you bear me ! Think how dreadful it would be if my heart were hereafter to be placed between divided duties ! On one hand my mother, on the other my husband !"

Mrs. L. (affecting to wipe her eyes, which are tearless as usual. In fact she can hardly restrain a burst of mocking laughter) : My child ! My Juliana ! You have yet to learn the extent to which a mother will carry the sacrifice of her own feelings !

Juliana : Thank you, dear dear Mother ! (*Exit to drawing room.*)

Mrs. L. (coolly arranging the folds of her sweeping dress) : On the grand point I'm beaten, ignominiously beaten, so I'll make

a virtue, a grand virtue, of necessity ; but there's one thing left to fight for, and *there* I'll conquer !

*y door leading to Hall, Edward, who being in demi-
: to display the glory of his nether proportions.*

*(meaningly) : Mr. Aylesmere, Ma'am ! (Aside and
himself.) Our young master as is to be, will she, nill*

*rank Aylesmere, drawn up to his full height, his coun-
-pared to assume the expression most suitable to the re-
-nay meet with.*

*(smiling an enchanting smile) : Good morning Mr.
: !*

*(smiling also, and a trifle theatrically) : Good
Mrs. Leadstone.*

*hake hands like the warmest of friends, which they
-now they are not.)*

: Pray take a seat.

*I hope you have recovered from the severe headache
suffering from when last I had the pleasure of seeing*

*: Headache ! Oh ! That was an age ago. You have
absentee these last two days—or is it three ? Really
very long time.*

*May I infer from your words that my presence
ese last two days—for it is two, not three—would
een disagreeable to you ?*

*: Disagreeable ! Quite the reverse. What on earth
e put such a notion into your head ? But draw your
way near me, Frank ! You look surprised, I shall
ll you Frank henceforth, Juliana's Frank, my Frank !
andkerchief to her eyes.*

(aside) : I'm, vulgarly speaking, flambergasted !

*: (appearing to have conquered her emotion) you know,
is the fate of some persons, women particularly,
icularly still, women of sensitive organization, to be
stood by those around them. Thus it is that
impressions are frequently given.*

But surely you are not of that number !

: What ! Mine not a sensitive organization !

Pray don't misunderstand me ! I mean to say

you can hardly be misunderstood by such a daughter as yours.

Mrs. L. : Yes, Juliana certainly understands me up to a certain point. Perhaps if she understood me beyond that certain point, she might be less liable to the influence of other counsels !

Frank : (*aside*) One for myself !

Mrs. L. : Enough of preamble. Let's come to the object of your visit.

Frank : I wish to explain.

Mrs. L. : There's not much to explain. I'll briefly tell you how I view the case. You, without consulting Mr. Leadstone or me, ask Juliana to become Mrs. Aylesmere, a good old name we all know ; in point of fact to become Mrs. Aylesmere of Lentworth, as your own mother was in her time. Juliana, on her own responsibility, and equally with yourself, passing by Mr. Leadstone's authority and mine, consents. You then go to Mr. Leadstone and tell him what you've done. He, without consulting me, gives his approval. Last of all, you come to me, not to ask me to give you the darling of my heart, but to tell me you're about to take her from me. You can't deny that this is the naked truth of the affair. Perhaps not the most flattering way to put it—Please don't interrupt me ! I'm saving you an immense deal of talk. I shall soon have done. Very soon. Yes, Frank, exactly as if I had troubled you to talk immensely, and myself to listen patiently to all you had to say. I now wind up with an announcement that will startle you.

Frank Ah ! (*aside*) : Nothing will startle me from her !

Mrs. L. : I give my consent to the marriage, and as far as you attach any importance to it, my blessing on you both !

Frank (*aside*) : This *has* startled me ! (*aloud*) My dear Mrs. Leadstone, from the depth of my heart I thank you. I trust my future conduct will show the sincerity of my gratitude.

(*Frank, rising, imprints a kiss on Mrs. Leadstone's hand, while she maternally kisses his brow.*)

Mrs. L. : Without implying any doubt as to your future conduct, I am about to put your gratitude to an immediate test. I have a favour to ask of my future son-in-law.

Frank : Your future son-in-law grants it beforehand.

Mrs. L. (*aside*) : I hold him ! (*aloud*) I would have your con-

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angement which will enable me, while conferring
ter the happiness she seeks in becoming your
rve to myself the happiness of her society.

e) : Quicksands ahead, by Jove !

'ou have, as yet, no home of your own to which
your bride. This is the home of your ancestors—
youth. Remain here. Make some small sacri-
e independence. *Live with us !*

le) : Worse than my worst fears had pictured !
ght in the net of my own impetuosity. All I can
a qualified answer.

ide) : He looks anything but pleased.

natter of detail to be settled between Juliana and

hen my wish is granted, Thanks my dear Frank.
hanks ! (*aside, with an internal cachinnation which
an unpleasant radiance to her eyes.*) You are not
it all your own way with your wife, young gentle-
promise you ! (*aloud*) Now, dear Frank, go and
stone. Tell him what has passed between us.
once to Juliana (*aside*) Before you and she can
pposition !

*spectively, Mrs. L. by door leading to the adjoining
ch of Juliana ; Frank by door leading to hall, in
Leadstone, well knowing, and knowing that Mrs.
ws, him not to be in the house !*

CHAPTER XXVI.

papers of the —th of April following, one,
arriages recorded, was thus announced:—

orge's, Hanover Square, by the Venerable the
of Middleshire, assisted by the Rev. Bernard
A., Curate of Lentworth, Middleshire, and the
Complyne, B.A., Curate of St. Mary's the Virgin,
orough, Middleshire, Philip Francis, only sur-
the late Mark Aylesmere, Esquire, to Juliana

Milesia, only daughter of Thomas Leadstone, Esquire, of Lentworth, Middleshire."

The journals claiming to rank as 'fashionable,' contained further elaborate details of the marriage ceremony in its various branches; such as names and dresses of the bride and her eight bridesmaids, catalogue of the bride's presents, with the donors of, and the houses furnishing, the same; proportions, design and maker of the wedding cake; particulars, and purveyor of the bridal breakfast; names of *invités* who, after figuring at the church, partook of that refection—the whole being just so many puffs inserted by tradesmen, with the connivance of the principals in the affair; for is not the aim alike of the one and the other, in these cases—publicity?

With the names of Juliana's bridesmaids—beyond parenthetically saying that Marie Duhamel had been asked by Juliana to be of the number, but had, greatly to Mrs. Leadstone's relief, declined on the score of professional engagements—we have no concern. They were, as a body, youthful and pretty nonentities; some her former schoolfellows; some selections from the 'upper ten' category of her mother's visiting list.

Frank's 'best man'—strange to say—was the Honourable Claude Cotherstone!

The person called to this post usually being one of the bridegroom's most intimate friends, Heartly's name naturally occurred to both Juliana and Frank; but Mrs. Leadstone, to whose crooked nature, petty intrigue was always acceptable, thought fit to make Claude her candidate for the office; partly because she imagined his presence would give a certain aristocratic air to the proceedings; partly because the painter, on account of his habitual plain speaking and dealing, had failed to ingratiate himself with her; she, therefore, worried everybody concerned into the substitution for him of the Honourable Claude. The argument she affected to rely upon was, that Mr. Cotherstone's acceptance of the functions would prove that no ill-will existed between himself and Frank on the ground of any supposed rivalry.

Frank and Juliana unwillingly gave way for the sake of peace and quietness. As for Claude himself, he affected to say it was certainly a monstrous bore being hauled into another fellow's wedding business; but his name was 'Easy,' and he would not

mind obliging friends who made a point of it—and so on. The end was that he entered very seriously into the other fellow's wedding business, came and went, did commissions large and small for the elder and younger lady, introduced high class tradespeople

made suggestions, gave orders, dropped in for dinner on a standing invitation, in fact played the part he seemed to have taken upon himself—indeed, he had been playing ever since the time it had been decided upon—of *l'ami de la maison*.

He had not failed to attract the attention of the quick-witted de Foix, as far back as the month of February, the end of which month he had remained in England. One day said to himself, walking away from the park, in the Anglo-French jargon in which even his thoughts would sometimes shape themselves, *mon d'homme!* Impossible to read him—S'il était possible, I should ask myself whether he magnanimously forgave his successful rival, or was meditating a terrible revenge for some future time, Mais ces Anglais phlegmatiques! Qui vivra verra!"

The reader of these pages who reads far enough into the future to see."

The wedding followed—hardly wrung from the reluctant Leadstone—a three months' continental trip. Of the first two months, two were months of such bliss as can be known by thoroughly congenial spirits, united in a marriage of unmingled affection, when money considerations, business calculations, carking cares of every sort are yet strange to the mind. The third month, which every day brought the newly married nearer home—that home which Frank had left with his mother-in-law—was a period of less happiness.

Leadstone's art had, as a matter of course, prevailed against Frank's attempts to retreat from the moral engagement which—subject to Juliana's consent—he had undertaken. To be sure, if the amount of domestic happiness for the family party was to be judged by the glowing anticipations expressed in the letters from Mrs. Leadstone to Mrs. Aylesmere, at various intervals of restes restantes, there was little room for doubt

on the subject ; but Frank—his mother-in-law's most roseate hues notwithstanding—would shake his head, and tell his wife he felt very much like a school-boy returning to school, after a delightful holiday. Juliana would, on these occasions, laugh at him, call him a dear old goose, kiss him lovingly, and reply that, since he was bound to regard her mother as part of herself, the more opportunities he could have of being agreeable to that parent, the better. Nevertheless, the young wife had her own secret misgivings, as to the completeness of the success likely to attend the efforts she recommended to him.

The last of Mrs. Leadstone's letters, which Juliana found awaiting her at the Hotel du Rhin, in Paris, has been preserved, and is printed for the reader's perusal.

—, Belgrave Square,
10th August, 186—.

MY OWN LOVED CHILD,

You will see that I have prevailed on your father to remain a week longer in town, in order that we may receive and welcome you at the earliest possible moment after your arrival on British soil. When I say 'you,' pray understand—now and ever—that I regard Frank as one with yourself. Oh, my darling, how I languish for our meeting ! How heavily will the hours pass away till I clasp you to my longing heart ! It seems to me marvellous that I have survived your long absence ; but convinced I am, that if such absence be protracted, my health will seriously suffer. Therefore do I fervently implore you not to let the seductions of Paris detain you beyond the three days you have allotted to your stay there !

When once you are at home, expect to be—prepare your husband for your being—monopolized during many weeks, nay months, by your adoring MOTHER. There ! MOTHER, and no longer mamma, though why MY daughter should prefer the plebeian to the more aristocratic appellation I am at a loss to understand. Certainly you are backed by your father, but then, allowances must be made for him, poor dear man ! Naming him, I call on you to picture him to yourself at this moment—while I write for to-morrow's day mail—in his easy chair, semi-recumbent, semi-somnolent, the very embodiment

t-prandial felicity. I need hardly remark that he has-
vay interfered with the arrangements—on which I told
vas occupied—of the respective apartments of our family
arrêé. Let me recapitulate the result.

present boudoir—opening, as you know, into my dress-
om—henceforth becomes *yours*. What is now your
s dressing-room will become *my* boudoir. He does not
—if he does he keeps his objections to himself—to occu-
a dressing room a story higher. Frank's dressing-room
ljoin his. A matutinal air-bath is, I understand, held
faculty good for these male creatures. If I remember
, the celebrated Samuel Johnson—or it may have been,
l greater George Washington—daily practised this sys-
I trust your amiable Frank will take his father-in-law's
'the matter, and not add his voice to those of the rebellious
ids who, I am told, exclaim against being—as they
sly phrase it—poked into remote places—packed up stairs
st away among the servants, for the performance of their
operations. *Au reste*, your beloved will, as you do not
to be told, command every material enjoyment that
in desire, while he will not find us *exigeants* as regards
posal of his time. But I find myself straying into a
of small detail which is matter for conversation rather
orrespondence.

will, of course, let me know whether you take the
or the Boulogne passage, in order that I may meet you
railway station, and be the first to embrace and welcome
ill which joyful moment shall arrive, Believe me, my
is child, your adoring mother,

EMILY LEADSTONE.

as the Boulogne and Folkstone passage that the travellers
or their return, as had been the case when they quitted
id—a natural selection, seeing the pleasant associations
mer place possessed for them both.

ie Charing Cross Station accordingly, Mrs. Leadstone,
d by Edward and a subordinate flunky, awaited the
of the tidal train, on the day indicated by Juliana.
uin was punctual almost to a minute, and greatly to the
ion of numerous bystanders, though, perhaps, slightly

to the confusion of her daughter and her son-in-law, did the lady go through the performance of a loving mother greeting her loved ones on their return from far off lands. So exuberant was she in her demonstrations, that even Gibson, in her character of faithful *suivante*, came in for a kiss—whereat Edward, in the back ground, grinned, thinking probably, that such osculatory act should rather have come from himself, as being duly and *selon les règles* licensed to “keep company” with the fair Lentworthian.

Arrived at the now really ‘family mansion’ in Belgrave Square, the party was welcomed by Tom Leadstone, jovial, benignant, and truly joyous, who had declined to accompany his wife to the Station, from the double conviction that she did not wish him to do so, and that this public manifestation of her feelings was a pure piece of scenic effect. The same sentiment—for this rough, ungrammatical, often harsh man was not wanting in true sentiment—induced him, the first greeting over, to carry Frank off to his private room, place him in a cosy arm chair, give him a choice cigar—of such flavour as, Frank admitted, he had not sniffed since he exhausted the two pound packet he had smuggled into France three months ago—and bid him consider himself at home, leaving the ladies to look after themselves—their various little domestic matters—rooms—and all that.

It appeared as if Mrs. Leadstone need hardly have troubled herself with the minute details which filled her mind, concerning boudoir and dressing rooms, for, two days after the return of the beloved wanderers—to borrow her own phrase—the family migrated from Belgrave Square to Lentworth. But in sorry truth, her dwelling at such length on these matters was part of a deplorable system, by which she was preparing a state of chronic warfare with her son-in-law for influence over her daughter.

“He married her, knowing my dislike to the marriage”—thus this self-deceiver sought to salve her conscience—“he must take the consequences!” And the same kind of chamber re-arrangement which she had so elaborately described as regarded the London house, was to be carried out at Lentworth, minus the stowing away of the two “male creatures” on an upper story. In point of fact, so long as Mrs. Leadstone could

obtain free access to Juliana's boudoir by a door communicating with her own, her chief object was attained.

Incredible as it may seem, this devoted parent made her first attempt at what was in reality sapping the foundations of her daughter's love for her husband, on the very first night of their sojourn under the family roof at Lentworth.

The two ladies, leaving their gentlemen in the dining-room, had adjourned to the drawing-room. The conversation, led by Juliana, had naturally turned upon Frank's excellences and virtues. Among other allusions arising out of the subject, she had remarked upon the entire and perfect confidence which in every way existed, between her husband and herself. Here Mrs. Leadstone perceived the opening she had been awaiting. "Delightful!" she exclaimed, "Truly delightful!—though I am bound to confess, somewhat surprising to me."

"Surprising! Why, surprising?" Juliana asked.

"Well, perhaps, I ought not to feel surprised," Mrs. Leadstone resumed. "I should recollect that men don't invariably extend the confidence they repose in their wives to their wives' relations."

"Certainly not, mother—very strange if they did. There are many—very many things that Frank would tell me which I should be much astonished to find him telling my relations."

"Your mother, for instance?" This was said pointedly.

"Oh! my mother—that's very different—I'm quite certain there's no subject on which Frank will ever show want of confidence in you."

"Are you?—Ha! ha! ha! Innocent darling! Ah my Juliana! You have a great deal to learn yet. But let's have tea, I don't find the subject a pleasant one," and Mrs. Leadstone rose, rang the bell rather viciously, kissed Juliana with effusion, and sank in silence amid the sofa cushions.

Juliana returned to the subject with, "If you imagine Frank has not told you anything he ought to have told you, let me know what it is. I have little doubt I can explain the supposed omission to your satisfaction."

"No darling, no—on second thought, I'll say no more about the matter; he's your husband. It's ill interfering between man and wife."

“ Interfering is a strong term, mother. ”

“ It is so, my child, but Frank might not think it too strong to be applied to my act, were I to say what is now on my mind. ”

“ Mother, what can you mean ? ” Juliana asked with nervous anxiousness.

“ Never mind—never mind ! I believe the less we say on the subject, the better for all of us. ”

“ Dear mother, I would not have a shade of doubt hang over Frank’s relations with you. This is probably some trifle to which you are attaching more importance than it deserves ; but, whatever it may be, I ask you to let me clear it up at once ! ”

“ Well then, Juliana, here is *the trifle*—Frank has concealed from your parents a fact of the greatest importance connected with his past life ! ”

“ Impossible, mother !—impossible ! ” Juliana exclaimed with vehemence, “ Frank is candour and truthfulness itself. ”

Mrs. Leadstone laughed incredulously, and rather bitterly ; but all further explanation was here cut short by the entrance of Phibbs and followers with tea and coffee.

“ Why is not the coffee taken into the dining-room ? ” Mrs. Leadstone asked sharply.

“ Master ordered it in here, Ma’am, ” Phibbs answered ; and the reply was immediately followed by the entry of father and son-in-law, both looking as radiant as men could look who felt happy in their own recent companionship, and expected to be happier still, in the society for which that companionship was now exchanged.

At the sight of her husband and her father, Juliana forgot the unpleasant conversation she had held with her mother. She hastened to meet Frank and Mr. Leadstone, kissed them both, prepared their coffee, drew them seats, and began to rattle away into a flow of light-hearted talk, which lasted till the tea-things were cleared away, when she sat down at her piano—newly tuned, Mr. Leadstone told her, in anticipation of her coming. After some preluding, she dashed off into the ‘ Roses ’ waltzes, from which a series of harmonies brought her to Flotow’s ‘ Marta,’ with its version of the ever fresh and lovely “ Last Rose of Summer,” at each of these two familiar

and suggestive pieces, her eyes sought, and of course met, those of Frank.

Upon Mr. Leadstone, Juliana's telegraphic glances, as these several links of memory recurred, were lost, but Mrs. Leadstone understood them, and laughed to herself at what she deemed their puerility; for with her artificial and shallow nature, she was incapable of appreciating the process of complete absorption of one spirit into another, which Juliana's had undergone into that of her husband.

This first home evening was to the young couple and to Mr. Leadstone a real feast of domestic joy and content; to Mrs. Leadstone, who, however, could not be wholly insensible to Juliana's manifest happiness, it was a source of less unmixed gratification. Although her daughter appeared to have forgotten the conversation interrupted by Phibbs' entry, she herself had not; accordingly, when the separation for the night took place, she thus, in a whisper, recalled it. "Darling, don't think any more about—you know what!" Then aloud, with fervour and three kisses, "Good night, my sweet one!" This was immediately followed by, with a single kiss, "Good night, Frank, dear—Breakfast at any hour you please between half-past nine and eleven."

To which Tom Leadstone added, "I'm off at half past ten. Frank, my boy, you won't mind me. Saddle horses and a groom for both of you at any hour you like; about drivin', you'll settle with your mother."

"Thank you, father dear," Juliana said, kissing him; "we shall both be down to breakfast with you at half-past nine—travelling has made us early risers."

CHAPTER XXVII.

MRS. LEADSTONE'S whispered advice to Juliana to think no more about—she knew what! had, as was intended, the effect of making her think a good deal more about it. Yet she said nothing to her husband on the subject which was uppermost in her thoughts while they were retiring for the night.

It might have been better had she acted otherwise, but she could not find it in her heart to check, however momentarily, the flow of his spirits, or throw a shadow of reflection over the sunny joy she saw he was tasting.

"Very likely after all," Frank began, as, having opened the window of Juliana's dressing-room, he led her to it, and they stood together, looking out on the gardens and the wide extent of richly timbered park beyond, all bathed in a flood of moon-light, "your mother and I may get on better than I had anticipated. She seems, as yet, disposed to be on the most friendly terms with me."

"Why should she be otherwise, Frank?"

"Certainly there's no reason in the world why she should," Frank answered laughingly. "If she is, it can only be on the famous 'Doctor Fell' principle."

Juliana was silent. She remembered the old adaptation from Martial "I do not like you, Doctor Fell," with the rest of it; and she could not in conscience say that her mother's likes and dislikes, were always the result of strictly just reasoning.

"I'm determined," Frank continued, "that nothing shall be wanting on my part to win her affections. I know she's difficult to deal with. One has to be constantly on one's guard in presence of her changeful temper. I always feel a certain restraint with people to whom I can't speak my mind freely on the spur of the moment."

"Do you mean, Frank, that you are obliged to—to have concealments from my mother?"

Juliana asked this with an air of mingled curiosity and satisfaction, feeling that, for the nonce, she was assuming the functions of a Spanish inquisitor, while rejoicing at the occasion afforded by Frank himself, for touching upon the subject which occupied her own thoughts.

"Concealment?—Not exactly," Frank said, as he closed the window, and drew the curtain, "yet there are subjects on which I could speak unreservedly to your father, but which, with your mother, I would avoid altogether."

"Oh! so long as you have no concealments from my father, all will be right."

"My love, I can have no concealments—because I have

nothing to conceal from anybody—and I trust I never shall have.”

“God grant you never may, Frank!”

After this, the conversation turned upon other topics, the young wife taking credit to herself for having discovered what was the head and front of Frank's offending in the great concealment question—namely, that he had told her father, but had not told her mother, something respecting his past days, as between man and man, and because of the greater sympathy which clearly existed between him and her father than between him and her mother.

Thus it came to pass that Mrs. Leadstone's first stroke of policy fell without effect, for Juliana never again referred to the subject; nor could she herself, according to the terms of the counsel she had given her daughter, take the initiative in returning to it.

The tide of complimentary visits to the bride and bridegroom soon set in strongly; and Mrs. Leadstone was forced, however unwillingly, to admit that the marriage of the heiress of Lentworth with “the representative of its ancient possessors”—as Miles Berrington delighted to style Frank—had rallied to the Hall many leading county families, hitherto conspicuous by their absence from it. This, for a time, blunted her weapons of offence against him, and she abstained, not only from any overt act of hostility, but from any of those violent displays of temper, to which she was wont to be aroused by the most trifling causes—often by no cause whatever.

This period of calm, protracted by a series of reciprocated parties among the territorial magnates of Middleshire, lasted very nearly two months. Tom Leadstone was scarcely able to recognise his household, thus unprecedently tranquil, and began to trust that the new order of things might prove less provocative of scenic displays than he had anticipated; he did not go the length of hoping that, under any circumstances whatever, they could wholly cease.

October, with its clear skies, and crisp breezes, its shortened days and cheerful evenings, came and went, and as yet, the serenity of Mrs. Leadstone's brow had not been disturbed to any extent worthy of particular mention.

Great latitude is allowed to persons notoriously uncertain,

irritable, and exacting, who are almost supposed to confer a negative sort of happiness upon those around them for which the recipients have reason to be thankful, so long as these their tyrants do not break out into acts of positive violence. This is a discouraging truth, but it is of a piece with another but too generally apparent, namely, that the selfish, self-seeking and odious ones of the earth are really those to whom the earth brings the greatest amount of success and satisfaction. This Chronicler does not mean to lay down the principle involved herein as one of universal application, but he defies any reader to say that he or she has not, in the course of an existence however brief, known among relatives or acquaintance, more or less striking instances bearing out his assertion.

The first week in November brought a small army of guests hostile to the pheasants, hares, and rabbits, which swarmed in the Lentworth preserves. Among these was the Honourable Claud Cotherstone, who made his first appearance at the Hall since the marriage. Mrs. Leadstone expressed unbounded satisfaction at his arrival. Juliana, who had long since conquered her early repugnance to him, and Frank, who had never found any reason for being otherwise than friendly with him, received him with every mark of approbation. Tom Leadstone alone while welcoming him as a pleasant addition to their circle, felt that there was a certain incompatibility between his early pretensions and his subsequent intimacy in the family. Moreover he had always regarded him, and still did regard him, as "a bit of a humbug," asking himself why such a swell, to whom the houses of half the nobility in the land were open, should have taken the trouble he did for Mrs. Leadstone, on the occasion of a marriage which could not be pleasant to him, and should have kept up a correspondence with her ever since that marriage?

He was unable to answer the question, and not seeing human nature through the same spectacles as the Vicomte de Foix, he could not indulge in the same speculations as the subject had presented to the mind of the Parisian.

The Vicomte, be it said by the way, had been invited to join the shooting party, but had declined "with profound regrets," owing to his engagement—an engagement which

l'honourable Monsieur Cotherstone, if (as was probable) of
 " ty, would appreciate—to attend the Autumn races at
 ly, that Newmarket of France!

Berringtons, *père et fils* were staying in the house, as
 Claude's friend, Marcus Aubrey; Claude had brought
 it Mr. Jack Duberly, of whom mention has been made
 as Lord Windlesham's yachting comrade.

besides being a shrewd man of business, was a
 der, a crack shot, and a lively companion, knowing
 ing of most people and most things; one of those men,
 t, who are invariably acceptable in country houses.
 oresaid were supplemented by a dozen neighbouring
 notabilities of both sexes and various ages. Then Mrs.
 one's clerical pet, the Reverend Bernard St Ives, was
 ent dinner guest, besides being occasionally put in
 ion when an extra gun was needed; for he was a very
 ot, and by no means eschewed mundane diversions—in
 aces!

concluding day in the coverts, devoted to a *battue* of
 : proportions, was marked by an incident which might
 ad a disastrous termination. Frank Aylesmere and
 ad Keeper, "got"—to use a descriptive phrase, more
 is than feeling—"an ugly peppering about their heads
 lies, with No. 6 shot."

accident happened at a particularly hot corner of the
 reserve, consisting of broken ground thick with under-
 and planted with fir, box and holly, to which four
 had been assigned—to wit, Claude Cotherstone, Jack
 y, the Clerk in Holy Orders, and Frank, each having at
 k a man with a second pair of barrels. There was a
 of some twenty minutes, when so countless were the
 ing pheasants, the scudding hares, and the dodging
 that more than sufficient work was afforded to these
 barrels. Suddenly, amid the shouts of the beaters,
 rring and crowing of the pheasants, and banging of
 os, there arose a cry of "'Ullo!—'oos that?'"
 ly's 'it Mr. Aylesmere and me! Just 'old 'ard a bit
 ten, please!"

question, the statement, and the request—delivered
 order—proceeded from Mathew Gibson, the head

keeper. The question and the statement had reference to "a gun" supposed to be stationed behind a clump of box on the top of a hillock; the order-like request, to the guns generally. Mathew Gibson stood down in a hollow a few paces from Frank Aylesmere, and he forthwith proceeded to answer his own question by saying, "That shot came from your place, Mr. St. Ives."

"I didn't shoot your way, Mathew," cried the Cleric.

"Come, St. Ives, that's a good one!" Claude Cotherstone exclaimed, appearing from behind a neighbouring tree; "why I can see the very rabbit you killed, kicking there by that bunch of ferns—To your right, Gibson, a little above Mr. Aylesmere."

"I beg positively to assert," St. Ives said energetically, "that I fired both my last shots at pheasants—regular rocketers they were—I killed right and left—I can pick them up myself to prove it."

"Better stay where you are," Claude said, sneeringly, "and as to your last two, you may easily have done this with the two pheasants, and yet have knocked over that rabbit, for you've been blazing away as fast as you could change your guns."

"Be *you* quoit sure *you* didn't knock this 'ere rabbit over yourself, Mr. Cotherstone, Sir?" Mathew asked drily, as he appeared in the open space, wiping his cheek, from which blood was flowing freely, with the sleeve of his velveteen jacket.

"Certainly I am," cried Claude, haughtily.

"Then I axes parding, Sir."

"What the devil do you mean by your impertinence, Gibson? But don't stand jawing about who did it—Let's see what *is* done. It might be serious—Hullo! Jack! Where are you?"

"Here," answered Mr. Duberly, from a remote angle.

"I say, old fellow, just step this way."

"What's up?" asked Mr. Duberly, appearing.

"Two fellows hit. Look sharp, old man! And Gibson—better stop the beaters. We shall lose all our shooting."

While Gibson was giving the man who held Frank's gun orders to this effect, to be taken round to the beaters, Claude, the Curate, and Jack Duberly hastened up to Frank, who was leaning against a tree, holding his right hand to his left elbow, while blood trickled profusely down his face.

"Nothing much I hope?" asked Duberly.

"Oh. I think not," Frank answered, "just stung a little
lead."

"m?"

hit there certainly—half an inch above the

s jacket," exclaimed Claude, suiting the action

d Jack, gazing into Frank's face, "Please look

difficulty opened his eyes, into which blood had
ne did open them, and widely too.

here, I'm happy to find," quoth Duberly; "a
though, by George! Look here, Claude. Ever
about the eyebrows—and begad, a slice of flesh
the nose! Might have gone into the cartilage,
dear boy's beauty for life."

e, Claude, who had been engaged in doffing
ng jacket, and raising his shirt sleeves, brought
l wound just above the elbow, which appeared
aused by several shots together.

ind picking out separate shots," said Jack
apparently concentrated in himself the entire
edge of the party, "but I daren't go in for a
. I must hand you over to the profession for the

son came in for a share of public interest. He
have been struck sideways about the cheek
gh with shots so scattered that no wound of
s perceptible.

water and a sponge, brought from a cottage,
a-piece of prime old Scotch whisky from Jack
k, soon set the wounded pair on their road home-
eaters were again ordered to "go ahead!" and
hot corner was resumed by the remaining three

ink it was Mr. St. Ives who fired that awkward
asked of Mathew, as they quitted the wood.
the time, Mr. Francis; but then, you see, sir,
he air couldn't no 'ow range four and foive foot
l. It beant nat'ral—be it?"

“ Mr. Cotherstone seemed to fancy Mr. St. Ives had made a mistake about his shots, Mathew.”

So 'e did, sir, and 'e moight be roight. But then 'e moight 'a made t' mistake himself. You know, Mr. Francis, there were tremendous shootin' in that 'ere corner. I can tell ye I've seed gen'lemen as 'as shot on and on till they've clean lost their 'eads and their earin' and a'most their soight—and 'ardly know'd whether they've been 'oldin' their guns 'igh or low, or 'ave shot one barrel or two. As a rule I tells our men as I puts on to loadin' second guns to try well with their rods, and be quite sure there beant a charge left in unbeknown to the gen'lemen. Any 'ow it's Bob Bailey as I set to load for the 'Onourable Cotherstone, and Bob's one o' they as 'as got 'is eyes well set in 'is 'ead, and I can get the roights o' the business out o' Bob safe enough.”

“ Ah ! well, Mathew, it doesn't matter very much who did what is done—for no great harm seems likely to come of it. ”

“ It doant, sir, it doant ; yet one 'ud loike to know for the sake o' knowin'. You see the shot come straight in Reverend St. Ives's line o' fire. I put 'Onourable Cotherstone full foive and twenty paces to 'is left, but I can tell ye I seed 'im, not once nor twice a shiftin' 'is ground and gettin' on to t'others.” To be sure, after what I've seed o' them two gen'lemen, I'd back 'Onourable against Reverend for coolness ten to one—and that goes for a deal in shootin,' it do.”

It was not much more than half-past three when Frank and Gibson reached the lodge gate. The former led the way straight across the park to the stables, carefully avoiding the house. There he ordered a dog-cart with a quick horse to be prepared, and with a view to sparing his wounded arms, bade one of the grooms get in and drive them to Middleford.

Mr. Bartlett, the surgeon, speedily satisfied his young patient that no mischief was likely to follow upon the wound in the arm, from which he easily extracted the shots, observing with professional gusto that, for his own part, if he must be shot by a clumsy friend, he would rather stand the fire of a breech-loader than a muzzle-loader. “ Decidedly not such hard hitters, my dear Mr. Aylesmere—most decidedly ! ” Which proposition he hastened to prove, while arranging

the damaged arm in a sling, by some reminiscences of his own early days, which bored Frank not a little, and the chronicler will not bore the reader.

He then hid—Mr. Bartlett went on to observe, he went with the master—he took in hand the man, he gave a pretty sprinkling of shots, and his wounds were deeper than skin deep. The free flow of blood which he saw, arose, no doubt, from the man's full and healthy body. It was no loss to him, and would be a couple of mugs of the Lentworth ale—the strong one—which, accordingly, he prescribed for the use of any remedy selected from the pharmacopœia. He thought, that he was not in the habit of charging for his own medicines.

In the Hall, Frank found that no little commotion created by the reports (inevitably much exaggerated) of the accident. Juliana, greatly agitated, was in the garden under the portico, and ran down the carriage-drive as the dog-cart approached.

She called out, as the dog-cart drew up. "No! No!" Then, jumping down, he took his wife in his arms and tenderly embraced her.

"God! Thank God!" she exclaimed. "But my darling has had!" and she pressed her forehead against his, though now, slightly disfigured brow. "He tells me I had a narrow shade of losing my darling," she said gaily.

"How awkward Curate!" Juliana exclaimed; "Mr. Cotherstone says, he's to blame. I shall be more than ever."

"No! Don't be too hard on him, Juliana, dear."

"It's quite an open question as to who fired the shot, but we had better drop the question altogether."

"Nor were Mrs. Leadstone and Claude, by the way."

Frank was embraced spasmodically, while he held his right hand with much apparent warmth, and said, "To get such a welcome from such a wife after a dozen shots in a fellow's body!"

"Your husband will never again earn a welcome at home," Juliana said, scarcely looking towards Claude;

What will Society Say?

after which, fondly hanging on Frank's right shoulder, drew him up to his dressing-room.

The glance which Claude cast after the retiring pair, have revealed volumes to any one skilled in reading the countenance, who might have been present to observe. The Vicomte de Foix for instance!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE period, of something like three-quarters of a year, by the wooing, the wedding, and the wanderings of Juliana was not unfruitful of incident to others of whose fortunes we are interested.

Marie Duhamel returned from Lentworth to London in a mental state comparable with that physical condition in the (too frequent) reports of railway accidents, is under the vague and unsatisfactory heading of "she is a system."

Unfortunately, the season being one of general idleness and educational repose, the absence of professional work left her with much time unoccupied. Under such circumstances she would gladly have availed herself of enforced leisure to keep up her execution by practising the piano, but such practice meant solitude, and solitude drove her back on thought, from which she was above and anxious to fly.

Heartley had remained at Westwood, and intended to stay there for a couple of months to Birmingham, where he was engaged to paint some portraits. Associated, however, with recent painful events, she felt that his presence would have oppressed rather than relieved her, and she regretted his absence.

Oldham was one of those absolutely negative men, incapable, under any circumstances whatever, of offering counsel or consolation. The poor man had a habit of saying that Marie was not her usual self, was dull and out of spirits, but he was so much in the habit of accepting everything as done by his step-daughter as the best possible to

done, that it never occurred to him to ask her why she was not her usual self—why she was dull and out of spirits. He himself was sensible of the great difference between life at Lent and life in the Maison Beaubois—of the change from idleness to hard living, cheerful society, and general aspect of ease pervading the one, to the frugal fare, monotony, and narrow space to be found in the other. Without much credit being attributed to Marie a similar train of ideas. She had, within a few days of returning from Middlemarch (which often occurred before), been summoned to replace her father by an old friend engaged in the advertising of a leading daily newspaper, in consequence of which she was as for the present a good deal away from home. Those who comprehend the character of Marie Duhamel can easily learn that she was not one to be long prostrate under the influence of a moral blow she had received. Indeed she would have soon rallied within a short time of her return to her usual life, but for that absence of serious occupation and active life which has been mentioned.

Her situation was destined to unexpected aggravation. One day she received a letter from Mrs. Belstrode, informing her that she had decided on a change as regarded musical instruction and polishment. She meant to substitute a male, for a female professor of the piano.

As a blow Marie's earnings were reduced by two well-earned days of four hours each. At another time she might have been much affected by this, aware as she was of the various situations incidental to her profession, but at the present moment she viewed it in the light of a fatality, and attached more importance to it than it really deserved, or than it would have deserved had she been in a different condition. Her actual frame of mind, in fact, was one which temporary despondency engenders distrust in all things that they exist, and points out a probable remedy in the exertion in some entirely new field.

It is observable that an idea may long lie unnoticed in a human mind, waiting to be brought to light, and become the origin of action for some distant or combination of incidents. Such an idea was unperceived by Marie, lain dormant in her mind

from the day when Frank told her how strong was the impression she had produced on Benjamin Screesman.

One particular evening Oldham returned from the office in Fleet-street at an earlier hour than usual. Marie had that very morning received, and shown to him, Mrs. Belstrode's letter, whereupon, seeing how much she was "upset" by the communication in question, he had exerted himself to reach home as soon as possible, with a view to cheer her up, little conscious how very much the reverse of cheerful he himself, good man, ever was.

He made a practice of bringing her a copy of his paper, the advertisements in which coming under the head of "Professional," he always carefully noted, with a view to the discovery of "anything in your line, my dear."

When he entered, she quitted—and rather gladly—her solitary piano practice, to ring the bell for tea, in which meal, he had, owing to his office work, been of late unable to join her.

"Got the papers," he began, as he sat down by the fire; "nothing up to your mark in it to-day. Six piano-and-singings, nine pianos alone, three singings. Four out of the lot at a shilling a lesson. We've had half of 'em in between twenty and thirty times; can't for the life of me see how it pays—I mean pays the parties advertising—of course it pays our people in Fleet-street. There must positively be more accomplishment teachers than accomplishment pupils."

While Oldham thus ran on, Marie had taken the newspaper, and was, in an absent, purposeless manner, looking down the advertising columns.

"By the bye," the old man resumed, after a pause, during which he had taken occasion to express his weariness by a prolonged yawn, "there's a professional of the sort we don't often get in our paper. Had it in twice; made us chaps"—meaning, no doubt, the chaps in Fleet-street—"laugh not a little. A party wants—you'll see it headed 'The Stage.'"

"The Stage," Marie exclaimed, with a vehemence that made Oldham start.

"Yes, Stage, Marie—Down the—the—Let me see—the fourth column—there—Better give me the paper, I can almost lay my finger on it blindfold."

Marie gave him the paper, drew a chair to the fire, and prepared to listen.

It is, my dear, 'The Stage'—reading—'Eleven
ted, six blondes and five brunettes for salaried
its. Totally inexperienced persons may apply.
ate by letter only. Z. A., No. 47, D— Street,
rden. N.B.—Silence to be considered a polite
Queer, isn't it? Now if our friend Heartly had
for eleven models for a picture, one could under-
—but blondes and brunettes for the stage, where,
our young chaps remarked, the hair's nothing,
everything—Ah! good evening, Beaubois!"

And eagerly seized the paper, the advertisement in
all as it appeared to her stepfather, seemed to
her a rather serious attraction, since she read it
again. She was so deeply buried in it that
who had brought in the tea-tray without attracting
on, was under the necessity of informing her that
is bouillante, the tea-caddy open, and everything
is pour faire le thé.

Evening wore on, Oldham could not but remark to
that Marie seemed more cheerful, more her former
y way than she had been of late. The worthy old
ally attributed this change to his early return from
and vowed to himself that he would make frequent
like end.

It was that the incident of the blonde-and-brunette
ment had brought to light the idea which had so long
lnt in her mind, and that she had formed a sudden
to take action on that idea, by communicating, on
ng day, with Z. A. She could not resist a smile as,
nce at the looking-glass over the chimney-piece,
it occurred to her—"I need not hesitate to range
h the brunettes."

Upon this thought there followed, by a natural
n, another, at which she did not smile. "Heartly
: very serious if he knew the step I'm about to
! If he were here I certainly should not consult

: original germ of Marie's idea was the confidence

in her success expressed by Frank Aylesmere, is as certain as that her sudden resolution to test the accuracy of his judgment arose out of a desire to devote herself to some occupation which would leave her no time for the indulgence of painful thoughts. She was completely ignorant of the details of the profession of the stage, beyond such as she had picked up from former conversations between Frank and Heartly on the subject. She doubted not that her musical knowledge would, to some extent, be useful to her ; but she was too much the professional artist not to know that every profession has rudiments only to be mastered by practice under proper instruction. As to this particular advertisement, she herself merely regarded any step she might take in connection with it as a first move in the new direction. Little or nothing might come of it, but it could hardly fail to indicate to her some path, by following which she might attain her end.

Before going to bed, she wrote three letters to Z. A., which were so little to her satisfaction that she destroyed them one after the other.

"I'll not write—I'll go!" she thought, "in spite of Z. A.'s warning. I'll see Z. A. and judge for myself what he or she is." She slept that night more soundly, and rose the next morning more refreshed, than had been the case since her return from Middleshire.

No. 47, D— Street, Covent Garden, was a house divided into flats, said flats being devoted to business of varied character. Marie's summons brought to the street door a seedy-looking, but carefully-shaved man, of middle age, who, striking a posture, asked her what she pleased to want.

"I have come in consequence of seeing an advertisement," Marie answered, speaking through her dark close veil, "It was signed Z. A."

"Oh, that's it, eh," said the shaven man, "Then of course you've got a letter to show, by way of passport to the hoffice?"

"No! I wish to see the advertiser."

"But the hadvertiser mayn't wish to see you, Ma'am—Miss. You know there's so many of you; he's got too much business to do to see everybody as—who—wants to see

the pre-li-mi-na-ry letter is considered necessary—
where the speaker looked back over his shoulder, “Beg
[a’am—Miss—Please let this young lady pass out—”

was standing in the narrow passage of the house.
young lady’ in question, who had just come bounding
staircase, and stood waiting with visible impatience,
very handsome, finely shaped, but rather bold-eyed
Marie observed, very fair hair.

one of ‘em,” the young lady said, with no great
of address.

if what?” asked Marie.

‘m engaged; blonde of course,”—touching her hair.
they couldn’t believe in the colour—Too ridiculous!

more brunettes wanted!” peering under Marie’s
you seem about the sort, upon my word you do!
wonder if you get engaged, only you’ll have to
p and speak up. Good salary. I know the people;
y at their back. It’s for Paris—Ta! ta!—Dare say
meet again. Hullo! There’s a hansom passing,

a fair-haired one skipped down the stone step, and
gnalling with her dainty umbrella, after the hansom.
Ma’am—Miss;” continued the shaven janitor, “my
: that no lady goes up without a letter, so if—Ah!
1, Ma’am—Miss—Please let this gentleman pass in!”
ntleman alluded to was now standing on the door-
ting to enter the passage. He raised his hat when
ned towards him, begging her pardon for troubling
he was about to pass her, when, to his surprise, Marie
er hand to him, at the same time raising her veil.
screesman,” she asked, “don’t you remember me?”
my soul and body. Do I not?—that is, all but the
ur name is as a spirit in the vasty deep which
ome to my memory’s call; yet you are associated
emory with somebody. Ha! I have it, with my
camarade—his own word—Philip Francis!”

right, Mr. Screesman, I am Miss Duhamel.”

at’s it! La belle Marie; he used to call you; but,
stion be not impertinent, what brings you to this

What will Society Say ?

Marie held out the newspaper containing the advertisement of Z. A.

Ha! ha! ha! Silly's advertisement! Is it possible utterly confounded. Do you intend to?—Stay! Per for a sister or friend—"

"Mr. Screesman, you have not forgotten the opinion once expressed to Mr. Philip Francis about me on the of the theatrical profession?"

"I rather think not, Miss Duhamel. Jones, you stay; I'll settle with this young lady;"—this to the one, who stalked loftily to the further end of the passage, and dived into the lower region of the edifice—"But you're a mistake about Silly and his blondes and brunettes; fortunate that I met you! Pray step up to my office and let me to precede you."

On reaching the first floor, Screesman drew open a green-baize, spring door, displaying two ordinary doors apparently belonging to different rooms, and on which were painted respectively the names "Mr. Tilson," "Mr. Screesman." He threw open that bearing his own name, took his hat with a flourish, and ushered Marie into his office.

"Now, Miss Duhamel, I'll ask you to take a seat and say a word in here." So saying, Screesman placed a chair for her, opened the door of an inner room, thereby giving admission to the sound of voices, one of which, Marie immediately detected as French, and passed in, and closed the door after him.

Mr. Screesman's office was of unpretending appearance, decorated as to the walls with provincial play-bills, and as to the matter of furniture, provided with a large oblong table, a small dirty inkstand, half-a-dozen comfortless high-backed chairs, and a cocoanut fibre carpet.

In a few minutes Screesman reappeared—but not alone. "Miss Duhamel," he exclaimed, "allow me to perform some introductory functions in favour of Mongsure Silly—Mongsure Silly is from Paris—Mongsure is Z. A.—Mongsure is an anxious enquirer after English blondes."

"Mongsure," bowing, scraping, flourishing his handkerchief, and giving his shoulders, advanced towards Marie, and commenced a voluble discourse in French. He was sure Marie

ch—of French origin at least ; witness her name
He was sure that Mademoiselle must be gifted
ellectual powers ; he was sure that if Made-
ded to devote herself to the carrière théâtral,
Scrismann had informed him was the case, she
be seen above the dramatic horizon as a star of
itude. He had not been honoured by hearing
speak French, but Monsieur Scrismann had
she spoke it as well as she did English. If—
the French fable—her knowledge of that
lled her beauty of form and feature, and if she
herself to be lancée as a Parisian actress, he
to predict that she would before long become
the French stage. In conclusion, he begged to
oiselle that he placed himself completely at her
l matters pertaining to French dramatic art, to
he would take the liberty of presenting
with his card. There it was.

o—*Rue de l'Ancienne Comédie, au deuxième, de 10 à*
ie would no longer trespass upon Mademoiselle's

It was impossible that she could be in better
those of his valued correspondent—indicating
As for himself there were at that moment three
vo brunettes awaiting his decision in the next
n, thanking Mademoiselle for the distinguished
id allowed him of this interview, he would now
then, with renewed bows, scrapes, flourishes,
: Silly backed into the inner room.

Marie, looking at the card in her hand, “ that
: Silly ? ”

is the proper pronunciation, Miss Duhamel—”
f opposite to her—“ I needn't tell you French-
help to you. So few of our stage ladies are
ted now-a-days. Yes, that's Mongsure Silly, as
Does a good deal of agency business between
Paris. In the present destitute condition of
ama, we're very dependent on the French article.
its go to Paris for their plots or their entire
anagers for their novelties of all sorts. As to
a school in France ; none here. No use asking :

why; but it's the fact. Occasionally, as in the present—pointing to the door through which de Silly had disappeared—“Paris comes to London for the original British won't apologise to you, Miss Duhamel, for talking shop have enough of it, if you enter the profession. No talk shop more than other professionals. Look at the doctors, the parsons. Well, I was going on that in point of beauty and form and feature—to expression—French women, as a body, can't hold a candle to our women. That's as well known in Paris as in London. Accordingly every now and then it suits a Parisian to advertize, as a draw, a troupe of English women and such a London theatre, where they have been performing to three hundred successive audiences in such a successful piece. Now what does this really mean? It means that to a few, say half-a-dozen, genuine beauties in the particular piece are added two or three dozens of course as finely made and pretty-faced women got together. These are tried, like yearling race-horses, the worthless ones drafted; any that may be thought worth keeping, first roughed over in whatever is required here, then finished off in Paris, where, after having been tremendously puffed beforehand, they are brought to London to run for weeks or months, as it suits the purpose of the Deerection. Silly wants these blondes and brunettes to do something like one of our transformations announced in Paris as being taken from a Grand Seaside Piece played over here, I believe, three years ago. He wants to be sea nymphs and mermaids, to float in real boats about on rocks, and all that. Thus you'll understand that he is able to advertise for 'totally inexperienced' women. You yourself—pardon the joke—proved how totally inexperienced you are in the preliminary steps of our business. But all's well that ends well. Fate brought me to London at the exact moment when I was wanted, and here I am, with the stereotyped question of Benjamin for self and partner—By-the-bye, I have joined Mr. Deerection, well now to Philip Francis—What can I do for you

(To be continued.)

THE ETHICS OF SOLDIERING.

WHETHER we are or are not better than our fathers, it is at any rate quite clear that we busy ourselves more with the discussion of moral questions. We are not "dissipated Leisure" whom George Eliot has described for us in a memorable way. His "easy jolly conscience" shocks his children; they are "made squeamish by doubts and high and lofty aspirations." And it is especially with regard to matters that this quickening of the moral sense has of late been apparent. Now in itself this anxiety is a good thing, but it whenever it has received a very rapid development is apt to mislead sometimes. When men are in doubt as to the bases of morals, when conventional morality begins to be dis-trusted, or seems to stand in need of enlargement and extension, when men begin to see the vast difficulty and complexity of many moral questions, of those moral questions which are mixed up with political questions, then it is the more thoughtful, scrupulous, minds, which, while they give us moral lessons of priceless value, will yet be apt to blunder at times, to see wrong where there is no wrong. Of this erring scrupulousness there was, as it seems, a notable instance in an article from the pen of Mr. W. G. Sumner, entitled "Asiatic forces in our European wars," which appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* for June last. In this paper Mr. Sumner rebuked the *Spectator* for advocating the conscription, to which he attacked as immoral and inexpedient. The substance of his arguments are, that an enlightened conscientious man cannot voluntarily adopt the profession of a soldier, since to go to war, except in cases of extreme necessity, is a terrible crime, since history shews that in the majority of wars have been undertaken needlessly, since the soldier is often called upon to obey those who, he knows, are unfit to direct him, since therefore he may have to do evil, and since his crime is if anything, increased by the fact that he is committing it at the bidding of others.

What then, argues Mr. Greg, are we to think of a proposal for making this crime obligatory on all, as the conscription would do? Then, having attacked the suggestion because the conscription sweeps together into the same net those who are fit and those who are unfit to be soldiers, Mr. Greg goes on to point out that we have ready to our hand in the higher strata of society, men who, as civilians, would be worse than useless, but who would make capital officers, while in the lower strata is to be found a corresponding class of men who, if left to themselves, would be a plague to society, while, if induced to enlist, they would make excellent private soldiers. Mr. Greg adds, as a further recommendation, of which more anon, that, if his plan be adopted, the business of soldiering, such a terrible stumbling-block to the delicate consciences of the enlightened, will be handed over to men whose crass moral sense will not feel the burden.

We have done our best to present a summary of Mr. Greg's views as to the ethics of soldiering, and we join issue with him on two points. We shall try to prove that he is wrong in his view as to the immorality of entering the military profession; and we hold that, since he regards the profession of a soldier as immoral, he is guilty of an extraordinary inconsistency in recommending the employment of any class of men as soldiers.

There is no need to enter into a discussion on the question whether war is under any circumstances justifiable, because Mr. Greg himself clearly recognises the possibility of a righteous war. He only maintains that such a war is the exception. Assuming then that wars may be righteous, it is impossible to deny that there must be some righteous means of carrying them on. If professional soldiers were in the habit of retiring from the army whenever they were called upon to draw the sword in a cause which, as impartial men, they could not approve, soldiering would cease to be a profession. What would be the use of an army in which all the officers and men holding Liberal opinions should feel obliged to resign on the outbreak of war under a Conservative Government? It is needless to pursue this line of argument further. If the military profession is to be really a profession, then its members must be prepared to stick to it through

thick and thin; they must regard themselves simply as instruments, whose duty it is to go whithersoever they may be ordered, and to execute whatever orders they may receive, without looking upon themselves as machines, but as conscientious men who are bound to obey with all their strength and all their might.

Mr. Greg implies that a soldier who fights in an unjust cause does what in him lies to further evil. Of course he is, from a certain point of view; but *on the whole* he is doing what in him lies to further good, that is, if he fights as well as he can, and does his best to earn his pay like any other conscientious industrial or working man. The truth is that, if Mr. Greg's argument were pushed to its logical conclusion and carried out to the letter for one day, the business of the world would come to a standstill. Indeed it is almost to be wished that some such universal test could be applied, for then the absurdity of this kind of argument would be so palpably demonstrated that almost all men would perhaps have heard the last of them. The case Mr. Greg selects is more likely to perplex a scrupulous conscience than many others, simply because the evil which the soldier helps to do in an unjust war is very obvious, and is not palliating. But the question is only one of degree; if it is sinful to help to further a great evil, it is sinful to help to further a smaller evil; if it is sinful to give direct help, it is sinful to give indirect help. The soldier who fights in an unjust cause sins, it is argued, because he is doing his part to promote misery which ought never to be promoted. Be it so; but on the same theory manufacturers who turn out guns, bullets, waggons, shoes, and accoutrements for the wicked soldiers, are themselves wicked, and the operators who produce the goods required, less wicked, indeed, but still wicked; they ought, in conscience, to resign their places, and let their wives and families starve. The argument might be multiplied *ad infinitum*, in which, if Mr. Greg's argument was sound, men ought, in conscience, to be resigning their places every day, until, in despair at this universal strike, employers, and those in high place generally, amended their ways. The truth is that, as the world is now constituted, almost all men must be prepared sometimes to lend their hands to work which, if they are thoughtful, they

must believe in their hearts ought not to be done ; at all events to give indirect help to the furtherance of such work.

We have another charge to bring against this article and that a far graver one. One who holds, as Mr. Greg holds, that a man of enlightened conscience cannot make the army his profession without running the risk of being commanded to do what he must regard as sinful, ought, we should have thought, to desire the general adoption of his own views, ought to rejoice whenever a soldier throws up his commission on conscientious grounds, ought, if he can use his pen as skilfully as Mr. Greg can use it, to use it for the purpose of propagating his own views, of enlightening the darkened consciences of the soldiers who are his countrymen. For it is but fair to say that Mr. Greg does not charge the soldiers with wilful sin ; he only pities their inconceivable ignorance. But it is precisely this ignorance which he wishes to see continue. Whether he knows it or not he has planted himself on the horns of an awkward dilemma : he believes that a high minded man, whose conscience is enlightened, who has “verified his compass” in fact, cannot become a soldier, because, if he does, he may have to commit crimes which, in his eyes, must seem worse than murder. But then Mr. Greg, reflecting, no doubt, that wars cannot be carried on without professional soldiers, bids us make our ignorant, unenlightened, but brave, fellow-countrymen fight our battles for us, and congratulates us on the saving in the wear and tear of moral sense which such an arrangement will produce. There is no use mincing matters. Whether Mr. Greg saw the matter in this light or not, it is in this light alone that the matter ought to be regarded. We with our enlightened, scrupulous, consciences are to sit at home at ease, and let our ignorant countrymen, happily for us untroubled by scruples, shed their blood for us. One is reminded of Macaulay’s account of Sancroft’s expedient for getting his *bête noire* Burnet consecrated bishop of Salisbury without offending his conscience. We must be pardoned for the length of the quotation. “Fortunately,” says the historian, “as childish scruples often disturbed his conscience, childish expedients often quieted it. A more childish expedient than that to which he now resorted is not to be found in all the tomes of the casuists. He would not himself

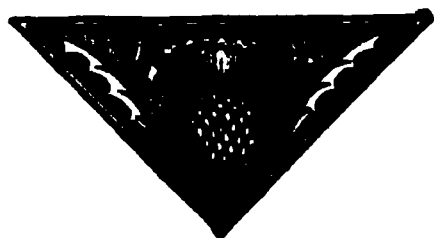
bear a part in the service. He would not publicly pray for the Prince and Princess as King and Queen. He would not call for their mandate, order it to be read, and then proceed to obey it. But he issued a commission empowering any three of his suffragans to commit, in his name, and as his delegates, the sins which he did not choose to commit in person." Mr. Greg asks whether soldiers, who obey a command to do wrong, believe in the doctrine of vicarious damnation, believe that their superiors will have to expiate the sins which they, as mere instruments, commit. But what doctrine is the man to hold who will not do a particular act which he regards as sinful himself, and yet, feeling that it must be done, gets some one else to do it for him. Does he believe in vicarious damnation too? Or does he think that, as his ignorant substitute is not sinning wilfully, the devil is ingeniously cheated of his due altogether. It is quite intelligible that a conscientious man may have doubts, at times, as to the morality of the soldier's profession. But it is not so easy to understand by what process of thought a man, who regards the soldier's profession as immoral, can arrive at the conclusion that he is doing right in recommending that profession to the notice of others.

Emotion often helps out argument. And if any doubter can satisfy himself of the validity of the argument by which he has tried to demonstrate to his conscience the lawfulness of entering the profession of a soldier, we believe that his faith will become triumphant and exulting, if he will think of the many deeds of heroic courage, of patient fortitude, of self-forgetting devotion, which are recorded of the soldiers of his own country. Let him read or repeat to himself that wonderful example of English prose which every English child ought to learn by heart, the passage in which Napier tells the story of the last charge of the Fusileer battalions at Albuera. Let him call to mind all that he has ever heard or read of the magnificent defence of the Residency at Lucknow. Or, most touching of all, let him read that simple, but almost perfect, little poem in which Sir Francis Doyle has commemorated the quiet self-sacrifice of the English soldiers, who perished with the Birkenhead.

We all, even the most enlightened of us, need not only more persistently good intentions, but better informed consciences.

in order that we may become what we ought to become. The greatest moralist has not yet given us a complete *ductor dubitantium*; and it may well be that the poor soldier is sometimes saved from conscientious twinges by the crassness and darkness of his conscience. But he is generally enlightened enough to know that he ought to do the work for which he is paid, and brave enough to do it. And we need not fear that more light will be denied to us so long as we are true to ourselves, so long as we manfully follow the light that we have. But if ever enlightened, thoughtful, intellectual Englishmen, having made up their minds that the profession of a soldier is immoral, shall think to save themselves from bloodguiltiness by sending their duller and less scrupulous countrymen to fight for them, then indeed it will be time to despair.

T. R. E. HOLMES



IN MEMORIAM.

JUNE THE FIRST.

O cruel, bitter Fate, that *he* should die,
Who claimed of England hospitality,
The Guest, whom adverse winds drove to our shore,
Exiled and friendless. Lo! he comes once more,
And from his silent lips a message rings,
Filling our hearts with the sweet thanks it brings,
Comrades and friends, with pitying sorrow wait,
The mournful victim of relentless Fate.
Was there not one the gallant youth to save?
Was there not one to share his lonely grave?
Not one, with him to keep the foe at bay,
Or with him fall beneath the assagai?
Not one—Alone he stood, the foe defied,
Bravely he fought, and, fighting bravely, died:
Was France his last thought, as in death he fell,
Or the fond mother whom he loved so well?
Once Empress fair, crowned upon France's Throne,
A widow then, now childless and alone!
With Crown and sceptre broken, only he
Was left her. Whither shall she turn or flee?
What refuge is there for her breaking heart?
To look upon his face once more, then, part,
To clasp her Darling in her arms again,
To kiss his cruel wounds in vain. In vain!
The warm and loving heart lies cold and still:
Ended the fair young life for good or ill!
Who knows if life were best, or Death or Life,
Or Peace or Rest, or ever restless Strife?
Heir to a glorious name which Peace still fears
Heir to ambitious hopes, to bloody tears,
Born to a fatal heritage of woe,
He died, ere disappointment's crushing blow
Could blight his young hopes and his bright dreams dim,
He died—Is it not better so for him?
Better beside his father's grave to rest,
If only she who mourns could say:—"Tis Best."

R. A. LBA.



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from

brought a letter, made pieces, which would otherwise have appeared tedious, not only brilliant but amusing from beginning to end.

It has been written in the dailies and weeklies, that it is unnecessary to pretend to criticise, either the merits or their repertoire, but it is not at all impossible that good may accrue to our Drama through those conscientious actors and actresses who have had opportunities of acting at the Gaiety Matinées. That tendency we have in our diction, to leave words to do what gesture and expression should so often first convey, to depend upon the action of one instead of aiding in the action of all, are which will, perhaps, be unconsciously corrected by our more intelligent, and so corrected will aid materially in the improvement of our best companies, and be at least some of the benefit derived from, and the value of, example. The novelty of any particular value has appeared on the stage since the Gaiety resumed its old line. The babes and young men, who are dry-nursed on Byron, and brought up by the Gaiety, showed an extraordinary amount of life by the expression of their pent-up feelings at the return of some portion of the Gaiety Burlesque Company. The Queens of the stage are still absent, but are there not the beautiful eyes and smile of Miss Eveleen Rayne, the match-like legs of Miss Lilchrist, and the boisterous larks of Miss Kate Lawler. The *Witches* had routed the foreign foe, and nearly broke down in their gladness. The *Toothpicks* curled with gratitude, and were found strewing the Strand for yards around the performances. But then these young gentlemen being bored with thoughts; their own are conspicuous by their absence, and they can't be bothered with other

ordinary manager to whom such a burlesque as *Venus and Her Rival* were submitted, would suppose that the compilers had been under the influence of some great draught, or that they had cut the wrong phrases out of a batch of old pantomimes, and strung them together without any sense of their meaning or connection. He might have said (but, Mr. Edgar Bruce is no ordinary man), "Here is neither novelty, wit, nor invention,

neither good songs, funny situations, nor opportunity for eliciting either good acting or amusing buffoonery," and yet Mr. Edgar Bruce knows the period he lives in, and the audiences he is likely to draw, for the stalls fill and applaud likewise, and will probably do as long as Miss Nelly Bromley sings her pretty French song, which she does admirably, and Miss Alma Stanley wears the costume of Adonis with the grace of an Etruscan hunter : as long as the stage is crowded with pretty faces and tolerable legs ; for our Crutches have not studied anatomy, and would be puzzled if they had to decide which knee were best in drawing, or which instep were most classical.

No sooner does a piece appear with decided success than every manager thinks something similar must be sure to draw the public, as if the public were not more tempted by variety than by a surfeit of imitations. *Drink*, with all its horrors and claptrap, is an enormous success. Consequently we have immediately *Drunkards' Lives Curses of Gin*, and last and latest, *The Worship of Bacchus*, written by Messrs. Merritt and Pettitt, two authors discovered by Mr. George Conquest, who wanted sensation and mechanism rather than literary emulation. As long as his writers "get to the horses," he did not care much about the "cackle." People who went to see his pantomimes did not take note whether the lines scanned, or if they rhymed, so long as they got the Dwarf's Head, and the Phantom Fight. When they sat out his melodramas, so long as aristocratic vice was crushed, and virtue and trotters were triumphant, they knew no more what unities were violated than they noticed the absent aspirates of the performers.

The authors of *The Worship of Bacchus* try to disarm criticism, by advertising that "they lay no claim to literary merit." This is a quite unnecessary sacrifice of pride to necessity, for no critic is likely to dispute their clever appreciation of their own work ; but what we want in a theatre like the Olympic, and under a cultivated directress like Miss Fanny Josephs, is a comedy which shall be conspicuous for its literary merits, and not dependent on the claptrap of "scenes in the Haymarket" or a show of the inebriated ruffianism. The Olympic will have to change its tactics if big successes are to

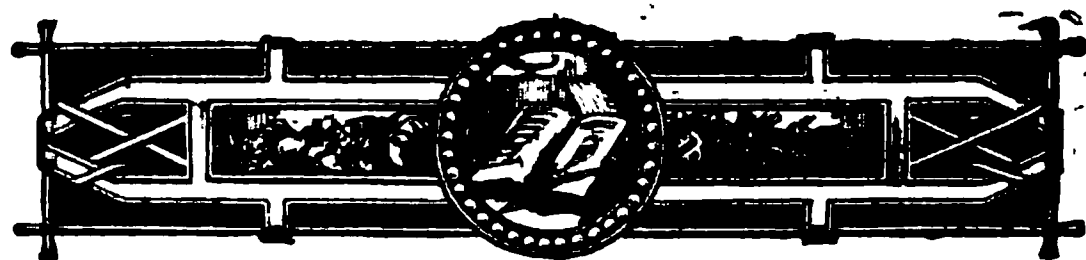
St. James's Magazine.

One "New Babylon" is quite enough at a time on stage.

Success is generally followed by a parody more or less rototype. The Folly Theatre, true to its title, is filled with *Another Drink* by Messrs. Savile and Lewis Clifton—who the latter gentleman may be but Mr. Savile Clarke can do better than this. A representation of a cruel and horrible malady such as *Delirium Tremens* is objectionable, when played in all its serious intention. Charles Warner at the Princess's, what must a picture of the tortured writhings and painful convulsions of a drunkard? Mr. Anson attacks the imitation with vigour, with such a desire to show that he too can do a "cucking dove," that neither fun nor laughter can be derived from this lugubrious attempt at facetiousness. To see Madame Dolaro in such a piece; though she does herself she does well, always artistic, and she undertakes as if it were the best part she could get. But we cannot afford to let our English comedienne. She gives her caricature of Sara Bernhardt so good that almost fancies she is thin, while we are sure she is fat. She dances her Dolaresque Quadrille with a grace so irresistible, but still we feel a pang at seeing her in such a piece, and would far sooner she played anything else in which her peculiar talents could have play. She is not meant for a low comedian: her features cannot sustain the image; but, after all, the piece is a success, so that is availing—money is being made, and that is good change, after the empty coffers of the Dragoons.

THESPIS.





AN ELECTRIFIED CONTINENT.

WE lately printed some impressions of a tour in the United States; but the writer had no opportunity of noticing the electrical condition of our Trans-atlantic kinsmen, perhaps at present the most remarkable feature in that region of novel developments. Edison has followed up Columbus "longo intervallo" and appears to have sighted land in a remarkable direction. "Eureka, Eureka," has rung loud and long from Menlo Park; and our correspondent, whose impressions we give below, seems to have faith in that cry. Electric lighting, even in its birth-throes, has a wondrous illuminating power; Mr. Edison believes, and the old lights tremble; gas flickers in the fitful breeze, goes out to all appearance, then flashes again, like the hopes and fears of the proprietor of gas shares. With Sir William Thomson's evidence before us it would be idle to pretend to ignore the evidently powerful lighting-force which is upon us.

SIR,—A careful perusal of the evidence given before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the above subject, including that of Sir William Thomson, must convince every unprejudiced individual that we are on the eve of great changes in our mode and means of lighting streets, stations, mills, factories, public buildings, docks, wharfs, &c., if not, as Sir William believes, our houses, both large and small.

Considerable progress has been made during the past twelve months in the application of electricity to this object, although many of the experimental trials have been somewhat costly, and not always satisfactory. The feasibility, however, of the work being accomplished by-and-by cannot be doubted, nor can the task be much longer delayed. Many people in this country, indeed, I may say the majority of English people, are incredulous, and treat with some amount of ridicule the statements put forth from time to time as to Mr. Edison's discoveries and inventions in connection with electric lighting.

Having recently visited the States, and having a taste for electrical science, it was my privilege to spend a considerable time in Mr. Edison's laboratory at Menlo Park, and to be shown a number of inventions of this scientific genius.

By your kind permission I will endeavour to describe a few of the remarkable things which were pointed out and explained to me.

Mr. Edison's laboratory is situated about 24 miles from New York, on the main track of the Pennsylvania Railroad, between New Jersey City and Philadelphia, and consists of extensive machine shops, with chemical laboratories, library, offices, and workrooms, near to which are the dwelling-houses of Mr. Edison and Mr. Batchelor, who is associated with them, and to the latter of whom I am greatly indebted for his courtesy and hospitality, and for the pains he took in describing, and experimenting upon, the various appliances shown to me.

The lathes, drilling, dynamo-electric, and other machines, are driven by an engine of 80 horse-power, of beautiful design and exquisite finish (American make, of course), and some £150 per week are paid in wages and other expenses for carrying out experiments at this unique establishment. Around the interior of the large machine shop, and bracketted from the walls, are Mr. Edison's new electric lamps, containing his platinum and irridium burners, encircled in transparent globes about the size of an orange, the burners themselves being not more than an inch long and spiral in form. The lights from the burners are found to be clear, steady, and soft, and each light is equal to 30 or 40 candles power. These lights are worked by a small "Gramme" machine, and the current is equally subdivided into these lamps—about 24 in number. The cost of working is very trifling, as the motive power has not to be special provided in this case.

It has been said that irridium is a rare and costly metal, and the same has been said of platinum, but Mr. Batchelor informed me that burners composed of these metals, indestructible under 50 candle power, are now being made in immense numbers at a less cost than 20 cents (10d. each) At the time of my visit, Mr. Edison was completing a new dynamo-electric machine from his own designs, with the view

of generating more dynamo-electric power (per horse-power) than any other machine had accomplished, and in this, as in most other scientific enterprise, he has achieved complete success.

Among the other inventions, which I will only refer to very briefly, may be mentioned the tasimeter, by which instrument, it is said, the temperatures of various stars, planets, and other bodies can be ascertained. Also the quadruplex system of telegraphy, by means of which four different messages can be transmitted on a single wire at the same moment, and the sextuplex system, by which six different messages can be transmitted in the same way. There is also a system of telegraphing or repeating a message from one instrument to another without the aid of an intermediate operator, thus avoiding mistakes in transmission.

The megaphone is an instrument by which it is possible to hear sounds at a great distance. This is so nicely arranged, that the sounds of cattle grazing or crunching grass at a distance of six miles have been distinctly heard at Menlo Park. By the same means the snoring of the sleeping populations of distant towns also can be heard, if desirable, in that quiet and secluded spot.

The aereophone is an instrument that magnifies the human voice two hundredfold, and there is Mr. Edison's "loud-speaking telephone," with the carbon transmitter, already in very extensive use in the States, and which promises to become of universal application. It is, without doubt, the most wonderful and perfect speaking telephone of the age, but Mr. Edison does not anticipate its superseding the telegraph, because there are so many messages which, for referential purposes, are better written than spoken.

The phonograph, with which I experimented for some time, is an extraordinary and most amusing invention, though of extreme simplicity. By speaking, singing, or whistling into this instrument, and at the same time turning the handle of the machine, the sounds, the words, and tune, with the tone, can be treasured up for any length of time, and they can all be reproduced at pleasure by simply turning the handle of the instrument in the reverse direction. It is a curious fact that by turning the handle quickly the voice can be pitched very

high, and by turning slowly the voice may be modulated so as to become almost inaudible. The phonograph, I may mention, is not, as some might imagine, an electrical instrument.

I left Menlo Park, with its museum of novel and scientific wonders, and my excellent guide, Mr. Batchelor, with some regret, and perhaps a feeling akin to that of Bunyan's pilgrim Christian, who, on leaving the Interpreter's house, is said to have proceeded on his way to the Celestial city saying

Here I have seen things rare and profitable,
Things pleasant, dreadful, things to make me stable,
In what I have begun to take in hand;
Then let me think on them, to understand
Wherefore they showed me were; and let me be
Thankful, O good Interpreter, to thee.

Yours,&c.,

CHARLES LEVER.

Bowdon, Cheshire, May 28, 1879.





DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 8.

When wife and husband don't agree
In us their prototype you see.

I.

I loved her then, my own sweet pet ;
I love her now ; in this we met.

II.

The merest schoolboy, if well educated,
Has met me oft with Greeks associated.

III.

" *Bis repetita* " may not be amiss,
But surely no tale ever should be *this*.

THE GHOST.

SOLUTION OF TRIPLE ACROSTIC No. 7.

L in S ee D.

10 answers received from S. P. E., Shark, Brevette,
never ? Beolne, Artemisia, La Belle Alliance, Quite a
thing Too, Nursery, Dowager, P. V., and Miserere.
10 and 49 incorrect—total 61.



MESOSTICH No. .

Sometimes a sage ; sometimes a mere l
Sometimes a big fool, and sometimes a

I.

What's in a letter ? less than in a na
Thus Yankees spell a synonym of fan

II.

Be humble, nobles of the earth !
From this your houses trace their birt

SOLUTION OF MESOSTICH N

BA Z AN

CR U EL

WEA T HER

Light I. Don César de Bazan.

Light II.

Cold eyelids that hide like a jew
Hard eyes that grow soft for an
The heavy white limbs, and the
Red mouth, like a venomous flow

Correct answers received from : Shark,
What, Never ? Quite a Young Thing Too, and
5 correct and 41 incorrect—total 46.

ACROSTIC AND MESOSTICH RULES.

I.—Each number of the *St. James's Magazine* will contain a Double Acrostic and a Mesostich.

II.—In *each* competition Three Annual Prizes, in money (1st prize twenty-five guineas, 2nd prize ten guineas, 3rd prize five guineas), will be awarded to the three most successful

-Special competitions will be held for guessing off ties

Prize-winners will be required to furnish their names and addresses for publication.

The same solver may win prizes in both competitions. Only *one* word can be accepted as the solution of each

-Answers addressed to "The Acrostic Editor," 5, Great Street, Ludgate Hill, E.C., must be posted in time to be received by the first post on the 10th of each month, or on the 11th, if the 10th falls on a Sunday.

—In accordance with the wishes of numerous Subscribers the Acrostic and Mesostiches for March, June, September and December will be in French.



St. James's Magazine.

SEPTEMBER, 1879.

HUBERT MAITLAND'S WRAITH.

A NOVEL.

By FELIX HOLLAND.

CHAPTER XXII.



EMILY SHOWS A LITTLE OF THE FAMILY VIRTUE.

WE shall never meet in Mr. Cotton's house again, perhaps never again anywhere in the world," thought Emily. But the next moment, almost ere the echo of Philip's footsteps had died away, her heart reverted to the friends who had more urgent need of her sympathy.

Now for the first time in her life she felt she was a woman, with a woman's weakness and a woman's strength. Weak, only in that she had no knowledge of the great practical world and its ways ; strong, only in the impulsive love and generosity of her pure woman's nature. Now, too, she remembered that she had another source of strength which hitherto she had almost forgotten. She was an heiress. Money, her mother's money, was hers in her own right. Why should not that be used to preserve her good uncle and her dear cousin from ruin? Her father was rich, and could have no need of her poor portion. It is true he had never loved Mr. Cotton or Mary, but then he was just. Yes, he would not refuse his permission—he could not refuse it—and a smile of happy impulse gleamed through Emily's tears as she crept to Mary's side and wound her arms around her, and nestled her bright locks on her bosom in soft girlish fashion. "Darling cousin," she whispered, "do not fear. I have lots of money, you know, and uncle shall have it all if he wants it."

Mary kissed the little kind-hearted girl, and glanced anxiously at her father. But Mr. Cotton had not heard the whispered generosity. He sat with averted face; he only heard a thousand voices wafted from the noisy city—ten thousand voices, babbling in heartless scorn, “Cotton has failed, Cotton has failed! Have you heard the news? Cotton has failed!” And he only saw an old, broken, homeless man, with a delicately-nurtured girl at his side, wandering to his grave with only a dim hope beyond and none before.

Mary gratefully repeated her kiss, and Emily tore herself away in search of her bonnet and shawl.

Emily found her brougham in waiting, and after the longest, the weariest miles she had ever known, she stood once more in the portico of Curtice House. The coachman rang the bell, clambered sleepily on his box, and drove away. John De la Plush promptly opened the door, and Emily was again alone with her father in the great sumptuous dining room where a month ago she had received his inexorable command to marry the man of all men she detested.

The great merchant greeted her with a formal good evening, as was his custom. Yet there was that in his voice and face which foreboded a storm. Emily did not fear. She had resolved on doing a good deed and was strong in the consciousness of her mission.

“You are late to night, miss; you have kept me waiting an hour,” said Aldair, pointing to a seat.

Emily sat down in silence. She never spoke while her father might have a word to say. The great man would not tolerate an interruption.

“I have waited for you very anxiously, since I learned you were at Mr. Cotton’s. It is my duty now to tell you that Mr. Cotton has disgraced himself, and that disgrace unfortunately all his friends must share, by a course of most reckless prodigality and negligence. To-morrow he will be gazetted a bankrupt. I need not tell you, Miss Aldair—for, despite your obstinate and rebellious conduct, you have still, I trust, enough of just family pride to be aware that under the circumstances all intercourse between you and my unfortunate brother-in-law must cease—the Aldairs have no commerce with bankrupts and swindlers.”

Aldair rose, frowning as he spoke, but Emily looked calmly into his darkening face. She was annoyed and hurt at hearing her dearest relative characterised as a swindler ; but she had been from her youth so used to hearing bankruptcy and swindling coupled in the same category, that both the one word and the other had lost its due significance. Her uncle might be a bankrupt, and, consequently, according to her father's creed, a swindler, Emily hardly knew what these terms meant, but she did know that Uncle Cotton was the kindest and best uncle in the world, that he was in misfortune and bitter sorrow, and that she was pledged to help him.

I wonder whether Aldair ever reflected that he owed his own vast fortune to the bankruptcy of his father, who still lived at the country-house of the family, in the village of Otley on Surf. Bah ! I wonder whether the worthy magistrates who imprison starveling poachers for trespassing on their preserves ever pause to reflect that all the land in England was once the property of somebody else and that four-fifths of the present owners neither bought it nor had it given them by its original owners ? Bah ! Possession is nine-tenths of the law and honour and honesty into the bargain. What mattered how Aldair obtained his fortune if he possessed it ? Emily nodded a reluctant acquiescence, and when she was quite sure her father had nothing more to say she timidly approached him.

"Papa, how much money have I in my own right ? I mean what you have told me I should have when I am twenty-one. The money which my mother left me ?"

The question startled Aldair to the very verge of apoplexy.

"Money ! What do you mean, Miss Aldair ? You are aware that your mother's fortune of some twenty thousand reverts to you. What of that ?"

"Only," said Emily, waxing bold, but still speaking very low, "I should like, papa, if you please, to give the money to Uncle Cotton, and then he will not be either a bankrupt or a swindler."

Aldair leapt from his seat ; the great veins of his forehead swelled thick and blue and his face grew fiery red. For a full minute he stood, with open mouth and eyes, contemplating his audacious little daughter in speechless horror. Enlightened

Lear never thought Goneril and Regan half as heartless and wicked as the pompous merchant thought little loving Emily. What virtues some wickednesses must be that bad men hate them so ! Aldair thought on all the cost of this girl's rearing, education, and surroundings, thought on all the wasted advice he had given her, on the duties of children to their parents, on the supreme importance of wealth, on all the expensive opportunities he had given her of bringing honour to herself and him, and here she was ungrateful and perverse as ever. Poor rich Aldair !

The outraged father found his voice at last. " And pray, Miss," he asked, sternly, " how do you suppose I am to find you a husband if I were for a moment to entertain the preposterous idea of permitting you to throw away—criminally to throw away—your small fortune on worthless acquaintances ! Listen, Miss Aldair. Two months ago I commanded you to countenance the addresses of my friend Mr. Abraham Moss. That command I regret to learn has not been fully obeyed ; but it shall be so. Your mother's paltry portion remains mine at present ; you are mine, and every thread you wear is mine. According to law and religion, you are mine, body and soul, to dispose of as I think wisest. Mr. Moss has this day again urged me to exercise my authority. You are anxious to part with your money. Here is a man who needs it and deserves it, for in his hands it will soon be doubled. You will find him in the drawing room waiting for you. Go and try to be less a sentimental idiot than you have shown yourself to-night."

" And you refuse to let me give my money to Uncle Cotton ?" asked Emily, turning deadly pale, and trembling so that the substantial chair in which she sat seemed to tremble too.

" Certainly, Miss !"

" Then I refuse to marry Mr. Abraham Moss," cried the girl, the proud obstinate blood leaping to her face, and her little heaving bosom all bursting with the indignant courage of an outraged woman. " Yes, father," she said, advancing and confronting him with the fearless rage of a wounded panther, " you may deny the money which is mine to your sister's husband and her child, though for the want of it they may be left to beggary and scorn, but it will not avail. The day

I am one and twenty it shall be theirs if they need it, as freely as the wealth they once had would have been ours had we needed. And as for this man you would wed me to. I hate him, and I swear that neither I nor my mother's money shall ever be his. You may shut me up in my own room, you may feed me on bread and water, you may kill me if you like, but I will never be his. I know you and he have arranged matters, that you have bought the marriage licence, and fixed the wedding day; but you may clothe me in my wedding dress, you may drive me to the altar, and I will refuse him before the whole congregation. I will say: I was sold to this man for money, I neither love nor honour him, and I will rather go into my grave than bear his name."

With flashing eyes and burning cheeks she dropped a haughty curtsey and swept upstairs to her chamber.

Aldair stood spell bound. Not when, two months ago, that ever to be remembered wail of despair rang through the room at his threatened curse, not when she had fallen and lay so still and deathlike at his feet, had he experienced so terrible a shock as this. He was yet standing meditating with knitted brows, when the door stealthily opened and the fox-like eyes of Mr. Abraham Moss peered craftily in.

"By ——, Mr. Aldair, we have had a narrow escape," gasped Emily's money's admirer. Walking rapidly to the great merchant's side, he said: "You are too peremptory, my dear sir. You will excuse me, I have told you before you do not understand these little creatures. Your intellect is too vast to bend itself to their whims and caprices; it is only by cunning and stratagem that one can cope with them."

"Do you intend, sir, that I should stoop to humour my own daughter?" asked Aldair, sternly.

"Yes, unless you want your daughter to humiliate you," Moss boldly returned, and continued: "Excuse me, my dear friend. I was about to enter this room when your daughter's voice arrested me, and I became an unwilling witness of all that has just passed. My dear Mr. Aldair, I have had great experiences—harmless experiences, you understand—with girls, and I know that you have bent your bow too far in this case and it is broken. You will never tame this girl now she

has once asserted her rebellion. Will you leave her to me, sir?"

"What do you propose?" asked Aldair, coldly.

Moss winked slyly. "To marry her to-morrow if you like. I will make her come and beg me on her knees to marry her, if you will only take your finger out of the pie, and let me work in my own way."

"Explain yourself," said the merchant.

"The simplest thing in the world. The girl loves you in a fashion, has high sentimental ideas of duty, generosity, and all that sort of thing. You see how cut up she is over this failure of Cotton's; she would give all she is worth to save him—how much more do you think she would give to save you?"

"I do not follow you."

"Briefly, then, Emily supposes you wealthy, but in truth can know nothing of your position; you have simply to call her back, tell her you are on the verge of ruin yourself, that only by her union with me can she throw money into the firm and avert it, and the trick is done."

"Yes, by my telling a pack of abominable lies to my own child. I would see the girl dead first."

Moss bit his lips. "At least," he said, sulkily, "you will perhaps permit me to tell this annoying little fib, considering the magnitude of the advantage to accrue."

Aldair could see no objection to other people lying in his interest and said so. Moss rang the bell.

"Tell Miss Aldair her father wants her."

In a few moments Emily reappeared, very pale and timid now, with signs of tears about her eyes. Aldair stood with his back towards her, looking out of the window. Moss advanced courteously, and taking her reluctant fingers he led her to a seat in the farthest corner of the room.

"Miss Aldair," he said, in the very softest tones of his persuasive voice, "I have been requested by Mr. Aldair to send for you, to explain certain matters which were too painful, or he would himself have done so just now."

Emily sat doggedly silent, and the eloquent Moss continued: "Forgive me, Miss Aldair, if you think me over bold—indeed I mean it for your good. Heaven is my witness that I

will be no party to any unworthy endeavours to gain this little hand, though I covet it more than words can express. Let me explain why I and your good, kind father—for he is good and kind at heart, though he has such rough ways with him—let me tell you why he has been so anxious you should reciprocate the unspeakable regard I have for you. You have just seen an instance of the terrible calamities which beset men of business in these days; you have seen a good man and his daughter suddenly reduced from honour, plenty, and happiness to disgrace, poverty, and misery. Your little fortune, small as it is, would have saved them, and I honour you for wishing to give it them. Now suppose—excuse my vulgarity in whispering, we must not hurt Mr. Aldair's feelings—now suppose another man, one nearer, and who should be dearer—one who had a greater reputation to sustain, a larger and more helpless circle of dependents—one whom all the world accounts rich, and who, nevertheless, is poor, and tottering on the very verge of that ruin to which others have fallen—”

“What!” cried Emily, springing to her feet. “This is a lie, sir; this is a plot—it cannot be—my father—”

“Is the man! Nay, hear me out; you need not tremble so. There is yet time. You have twenty thousand pounds, I have forty; the use of this sixty thousand pounds will save his reputation, his happiness, his life. Miss Aldair, do you yet refuse my hand?”

Aldair, where he stood at the window, overheard only a part of Mr. Moss's eloquent appeal; yet he heard enough to turn his very soul to loathing and disgust, not so much at Moss's lying scoundrelism, as at the thought that anyone—that his own daughter above all—should be permitted for a moment to suspect him other than the wealthy, prosperous man he was. But the die was thrown, he was powerless to recall it now, and with a muttered curse on Abraham Moss's lies, and the obstinacy of the girl that had rendered them expedient, he sank in a chair and hid his face in his hands in an agony of rage and chagrin.

“Do you yet refuse my hand, Miss Aldair?” Moss asked again.

Emily snatched her fingers from his fawning touch, and tottered a few steps towards her father. He was rocking

himself to and fro in his chair, and the great drops of agony were bursting from his forehead and through his clutching hands. One glance was enough, the poor tortured girl mistook his shame for sorrow, and staggering across the room she fell on her knees.

“Oh, my God!” she cried. “Father, dearest father, forgive me! I was wicked and cruel, but I did not know—indeed I did not. I will do all that you wish; all!—all!”

Mr. Moss slunk to her side. “Hush,” he whispered.

“Do not trouble him now, your answer is enough. Only leave him; you know how proud he is, more words will break his heart.”

He led her weeping to the door, and kissing her listless hand as she went, he slipped a little jewelled ring upon her finger.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A GLIMPSE AT PHILIP'S ANTECEDENTS.

MEANWHILE Philip Celini had not been idle. His resolution had been taken more promptly than Emily's, and with the almost feminine impulsiveness which characterized him, he set to work to accomplish his purpose. No sooner was he outside the house than he felt his pulse quicken with all the enthusiasm of an heroic nature, and he bounded along the London road with the speed of a greyhound. He reached Richmond Bridge, and as yet he had not paused to breathe. He crossed it with hardly a glance at the beautiful scene which stretched on either side, through the long streets of dreary villas, then along the pleasant roads where the shadow of the trees lay moving on his path, out into the open fields in which the stars and the waning moon looked down, past scattered cottages, villas, streets once more, with here and there a glimpse of the bright dark river as it hurried on as if bent on reaching the great city before him. Oh, how sad at heart was the lonely lad, as he saw it all and thought how dear had grown each step of the familiar road along which he had so often passed—along which he had so often passed to meet

her at his journey's end ! Who could tell if he would ever meet her there again !

Hammersmith was reached at last, the bridge was crossed, and then Philip rested. A moment he stood by the river side, gazing sadly on the ebbing tide, thinking of a night not long ago but seeming long, when he had stood gazing on it, and Pearl, dear, never to be forgotten Pearl, was standing at his side. Soon the hurrying water which murmured at his feet would be bubbling through the very bridge on which they stood. Would that it could bear to her some thoughts of him ! Here, too, was the house where he had first beheld her, the drear lonely home of Alaric Fane. Philip glanced up at the dark windows : there was no single ray of light in any one.

As he stood regarding, with upturned face, the great white form drifted to his side, and a cheery voice rang in his ear,—

“Not a pleasant exterior, is it, Mio Tenore ? It is better within. There is light and wine within, and magic herbs that will waft you to Elysium in ambrosial clouds.” And Alaric, in his flannel boating suit, took the lad's hot hands in his and led him towards the door.

Philip returned the frank, honest grasp, and strove to return the smile which flickered over the dark, sorrowful face.

“Indeed,” he said, “I was seeking you. It is growing late, but you will spare me an hour I know.”

“Very glad of your company, I assure you. I was just going for a pull on the river to beguile the night.”

Philip passed into the room, and Alaric lit some dim old-fashioned lamps, entreating his guest the while to be seated and make himself as much at home as he could. There were bottles and decanters, and glasses and cigars, strewn over the table, mingling with books, newspapers, scraps of writing, letters, parchment documents, all in inextricable confusion. Now, too, Philip perceived, or thought he perceived, that his companion had been drinking. His eyes were bloodshot, the pupils were dilated to an extraordinary degree, and his face had a flushed and hectic glow altogether unlike its normal bronze.

He offered a cigar, lit a huge treacly havana himself, poured out some wine, and drew a chair close to Philip's. Then,

placing a foot on each hob, and blowing a great cloud of smoke towards the ceiling, he said,—

“Now, young Orpheus, empty your glass, and out with your errand. Thank Heaven nobody comes to me unless they want something, and if it does not happen to be something I want myself they are generally welcome. So don't be bashful, young 'un. Out with it, and when we have got business over we will have another glass to crown our labours.”

Alaric had already taken two, and, as he spoke, he filled a third. Philip observed his unsteady hand, and needed not his unusual loquacity to teach him that his companion, if not yet intoxicated, was fast becoming so, and with a sigh of regret he hastened to declare his errand.

“I have been driven to you at this late hour,” he said, “by a very urgent matter. A terrible misfortune has befallen your friend Mr. Cotton—”

“Up a tree,” said Alaric, from his cloud of smoke. “Told him he would be, some months ago—Wouldn't listen—Pig-headed—Serves him right! Let's not talk of that. Let us drink and be merry. See yonder old wry-faced moon, how she is laughing at us poor self-tormenting mortals. To the devil with care!”

And blowing a cloud of smoke from his lips he trolled out—

“Chez lui le diable est bon homme,
Aussi voyons nous d'abord
Ixion faisant un Somme
Près de Tantale ivre mort.”

Philip stared in mute astonishment.

“And this,” he said, “is your friendship, Alaric Fane. Smoking, drinking, and singing, while your nearest friends are overwhelmed with misery.”

Alaric leapt up so fiercely from his seat that Philip recoiled involuntarily before the threatening giant, who instantly dropped his upraised hand; falling back, he burst into a loud contemptuous laugh, and seizing a champagne glass he filled it with raw brandy and quaffed it at a draught.

“Bah!” he exclaimed, stroking his great beard, “I must drink and laugh or think and go mad.”

Philip swallowed his indignation, and waiting patiently till his half inebriate companion lapsed into smoke and silence,

he said, in that quiet deliberate voice which soonest reaches the intelligence of the intoxicated,—

“I came here, Mr. Fane, to consult you, not to share in what I must consider most unreasonable mirth. I had certainly thought to find in you a sympathetic sharer of your friend's grief, and perhaps to obtain from you such help and advice as they had reason to expect—though they would never ask it for themselves,—from a friend who all the world proclaims to be generous as he is rich.”

Alaric turned a half-serious face, and Philip, perceiving he had made an impression, continued :

“However, since you think so lightly of their sorrow I must try what little I can do from my own resources. I am peculiarly placed, and need some help from one familiar with the customs and laws of England. At another time I should have gone to Mr. Cotton. Now it is impossible.”

Philip paused ; seeing his companion still silently attentive, he resumed :

“Fifteen years ago a ship was wrecked off the coast of Spain. She sprung a leak during the night, and in the morning the crew took to her boats. Among the passengers were my father and I. The former, seeing the boats full and escape impossible, threw me among the escaping sailors. These were for dropping me overboard, but some kinder-hearted fellows, who perhaps had children of their own at home, preserved me. I was carried to Spain, thence to Italy, to an address that had been discovered tied to my neck. There I grew up under the care of a good old Florentine, a brother of my grandmother. The language came almost natural to me, and as I had no single want, and hardly a whim that was not gratified as soon as known, I found myself very happy. My sole occupation was reading poetry, and romances, and music. I learned next to nothing beyond these, till I grew up and discovered the imperfection of my education—alas, too late to remedy it ! Last year my good old guardian died, and was buried amidst the tears of half the inhabitants of Florence, and most heartily mourned by me who owed everything to his care. Finding myself alone in the world, I gave myself up to a yearning which had long tormented me, and resolved to visit the land of my birth. This I was the more resolved on from the fact

that my old benefactor had died in debt, and I had only my music to support me, and by another circumstance, which I will presently relate. So one fine morning I packed up my little bundle of clothes, took my violin under my arm, and started off. I passed through Lombardy, and Switzerland, into Germany, down the Rhine to Holland, thence to England, having lived almost luxuriously on the ungrudged reward of my music. Sometimes I played in the streets, sometimes in village inns, or at cottage hearths. I lost my poor fiddle in crossing from Rotterdam; some rough drover fellows broke it in brutal sport, and I landed here in a sorry plight, having neither money nor the means of earning it. Heaven, however, sent me friends and I have taken no harm."

"Your story really interests me, young Will-o'-the-Wisp," broke in Alaric, "but——"

"But you don't see what that has to do with the subject in hand? Pardon me, it has. I have here," said Philip, carefully untying a little bundle of papers, "I have here a letter which was found among others in my guardian's desk. The date proves it to have been written by my father shortly before we left England. Read it, if you please, and you will see why I need your help."

Alaric took the letter, and drawing the lamp to his elbow, lay back in his chair and read deliberately:—

"London, Oct. 14, 18—

"Dear Friend,

"I presume you have not had time to reply to my last letter in which I related my sad misfortune. I have now to tell you that I have finally resolved to emigrate. To go back to the scene of so many miseries is impossible; to remain in this noisy, smoky city after having all my life lived in the pure air is also impossible. I will take my boy, the only treasure I value now, to a new land, where perhaps a better fortune awaits him than his father's has been. I have taken with me all the cash I had at my banker's; that will be amply sufficient for our needs. For the land, I leave it to take care of itself. There is a curse upon it, and from the day I set my foot upon its green sward a curse has depended over me. My young life was blighted, my bride went mourning to an

early grave, and now her child, ah ! you cannot tell how I loved the little darling girl, has passed in a cloud of fire to God ! His will be done, but it is very hard to bear ! This land, my friend, is no longer an estate to me ; to me it is only the grave of my wife and child. Let it lie fallow, and grow wild flowers over them, till the day of doom ! I will never reap another harvest from it. For it has brought me a harvest of everlasting sorrow. I have deposited the title deeds with my solicitors, Messrs. Splithoof and Dovecot, and now set out for a new, though I cannot hope a happy life. Happy only if I may bring up my boy to a better fate, and die. Now wishing you farewell and a long continuance of the tranquil life you now enjoy,

“ I am, dear Signor Celini,

“ Your heartbroken friend,

“ PHILIP CLARK.”

Alaric was growing more sober by the effort of sustained attention. He looked earnestly from the letter to Philip.

“ So your real name is Clark,” he said.

“ Yes,” replied Philip, “ but I have borne my guardian’s name so long that I do not care to change it. Besides, Celini is worth five hundred a year more than Clark, if I should ever achieve any position in music.”

“ But these lands—land is worth a pretty penny in England to-day, I can tell you. The letter looks genuine. By the way, I know something of Splithoof and Dovecot. Sharp men. Have you consulted them ? ”

“ I have done nothing,” returned Philip, gravely. “ I understand by the tone of that letter my father did not wish me to inherit this estate, and his wish of course controls me. I cannot but think it was merely the superstitious whim of a man broken and maddened by misfortune, but I have respected it and shall do so.”

“ Then what help do you want of me ? ” asked Alaric, giving back the letter.

“ I want you to assist me to sift this matter with all celerity, to get possession of this property if it is really mine, that I may give it, or lend it, to the friends who need it. It

may be as rich in blessing to them as it was prolific of misery to my parents."

Alaric crossed to Philip's side and took the lad's delicate hands in his powerful grasp and held them tenderly as they had been a woman's, and looking into his beautiful enthusiastic face, said earnestly :

"In my heart of hearts I love and honour you for this. But do not think you alone can be magnanimous. Mr. Cotton is already saved. This afternoon the sum of fifty thousand pounds was placed to his credit with his bankers."

Philip heartily returned the grasp of his hands, and thought this Alaric Fane the noblest man in the whole world.

But Alaric could not be persuaded to renew his visits to Summerville Lodge, nor did Mr. Cotton suspect till long afterwards, when he was again a prosperous man, that the vast sums his relenting bankers placed unexpectedly at his disposal were other than their own.



CHAPTER XXIV.

ALARIC FINANCIAL.

EARLY next morning Philip awoke and sought Alaric at his home by the river side.

"Mr. Fane, I think," the servant explained, "has gone for a pull in his outrigger, and he gave orders to have his breakfast ready at nine. That will be his second, for he had one before he started. He will be home in half an hour, sir, unless he gets upset, which is very likely, as the water is rough ; but he's used to that."

As Philip gave no encouragement to the fellow's loquacity he presently withdrew. In course of half an hour Alaric's heavy step echoed through the corridor, and Alaric himself, clad in a button-up frock coat, box hat, ample shirt front, and black tie, looking in fact quite the city man, marched into the room. For once the domestic's prognostications were at fault. Alaric had not been on the water that morning. He had been visiting an old acquaintance, Mr. Splithoof, of the firm of Splithoof and Dovecot, who had a house at Chiswick

Mall. Alaric greeted Philip cordially, and at once commenced an attack on breakfast, and insisting on his visitor partaking that hospitality.

Philip begged to be excused, though in truth he had tasted nothing since the previous evening.

"That's where you are indiscreet, Mio Tenore. Any man can eat a double breakfast if he accustoms himself to it, and breakfast is your only true meal. Luncheon is an excuse for spoiling dinner, dinner an opportunity for conversation with the ladies, and supper is rank ruin. There's nothing like a breakfast for two to be eaten by one."

Finding Philip could not be induced to partake his hospitable meal, Alaric hastily pushed his plate aside. He had indeed, as Philip suspected, only ordered this second breakfast for his particular benefit. Then Alaric lit a cigar and they strolled out by the river side.

"It's all right, my lad," said Alaric, puffing at his cigar.

"What is all right?"

"The letter—and the property—worth about eight thousand. Splithoof holds the title deeds. I know Splithoof—was my father's solicitor at one time—been to see him this morning. Only identity to be proved—that may be difficult—ought not to be impossible."

"It is really good of you to take so kind and prompt an interest in my perplexity," returned Philip, "but you forget; I must not, I dare not claim this property for myself."

"Oh! bah! The sooner you shake this sentimental superstition out of you the better," exclaimed Alaric. "Besides you will not claim it for yourself. No man can possess property for himself. He must use the greater part for the benefit of others, whether he will or no. A man, were he as rich as Plutus, can only eat and drink a certain modicum of provisions per diem, wear out a few suits of clothes per annum, and live in one room at a time. All the rest of his income goes to the feeding, clothing, and lodging of others. Anyhow it is your plain duty to get this estate out of the lawyers' hands as quickly as possible."

"And what then?"

Alaric evaded an answer by asking how Philip intended earning a living without it.

"By my music. That is the only thing I am fitted for," returned Philip.

Then the conversation adverted to Mr. Cotton and Mary, and finally to Emily Aldair.

On this last subject Philip grew inexhaustibly eloquent, nor could the most critical observer have detected in Alaric's cheerful, often humorous conversation, the slightest manifestation of jealousy or regret. As for Philip, thoughtless boy as he was, he extolled Emily's goodness and beauty by the hour, never once imagining that the subject might be less agreeable to Alaric than to himself.

And once or twice he was on the point of speaking of that other beautiful woman they knew so well. He wondered if Pearl had ever seen her early lover again, since that last sad farewell he had witnessed; if she ever wrote to him, or whether she had vanished altogether from his life as she seemed to have done from his own. For to this day Philip had received from her no token, and mindful of his promise he dared not seek her. He longed to tell his friend and hers of all the kindness he had experienced at the hands of that wayward and unfortunate girl. Once he went so far as to relate part of the story, concealing however the name of the heroine. Alaric smiled sadly and betrayed no great interest.

She has told him nothing, thought Philip, and that was a great comfort to him; he would have been much ashamed if his new friend had known all the truth. Yet the secret knowledge of their common interest in the poor girl was a source of sympathy for Philip. And inexplicable as was the past, dark as was the future, he felt that somehow good would be the final goal of all. And in his heart there sprung up a strange yearning that it might come at last in the form of a union between those two erring, struggling souls.

Alaric now discovered he was very thirsty and they returned to the house. He drank off two glasses of raw brandy, and sitting down by the window lit a fresh cigar. He grew quite talkative under the influence of these potations, but seeming suddenly to find himself too communicative he lapsed into thoughtful silence. At last he broke into a merry whistle and threw his cigar out of the window.

"Eureka! Philip, my boy, I have it."

"What, a cold in the head?" asked his friend.

"No; an idea," said Alaric. "You shall be a merchant—a merchant, most respected sir; yea, a buyer and a seller of silks, and wools, and of cotton, and of feathers, and of flax, and of adornments, and vanities, and fallals and kickshaws, and every thing that delighteth the eyes of a woman in every land and city under the sun. Yea, put a pen behind thine ear and comport thyself gravely, as becometh a partner of Messrs. Cotton and Co. Alaric infelix dixit."

Philip began to suspect his companion was again on the verge of intoxication.

"But," he said, "only last night you told me Mr. Cotton no longer had any need of my poor services."

"Oh, I forgot. I find I can hardly spare so much money as our friend requires just now."

"And how am I to manage this?"

"Oh, that's very easy; first sell this land of yours—no, first get it, then sell it. I withdraw £8,000 and substitute yours. The business is paying $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Cotton is a first rate man, if you only give him sufficient means, and with the help of your valuable services, who knows but his may become the first house in London, not excepting even the stupendous Aldair. Let me see: interest on £8,000 at $7\frac{1}{2}$, £600 per annum; services, $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. the first year, 3d. the second, $3\frac{1}{2}$ d the third, and so on, increasing according to value. Why it's a magnificent prospect. Allow me to congratulate you, John Champagne."

"But how about the music?" asked Philip, dolefully.

"Music be—befuddled," said Alaric, emphasizing the epithet with the pop of the champagne bottle.

"Now," he continued, "for proposition number two. You will excuse me speaking plain, my lad; as I don't happen to be blind or deaf, it is impossible for me to be ignorant of that little matter between you and Miss Aldair. You don't seem quite to realize your danger. You two young simpletons are billing and cooing on your own account, while her father is arranging a marriage of convenience for his dear daughter's benefit. Why not cut the eligible party out, and marry the girl yourself?"

"What, on a possible £600 a year?" Philip blushed and smiled incredulously.

"No ; on a certain six hundred and twopence halfpenny a year, and a progressive income, as I have shown you, to meet the expenses of the family we will venture to predicate."

"And you seriously believe Aldair could be persuaded to that ? " Philip asked.

His companion burst into a roar of laughter.

"You greenhorn !" he exclaimed. "Why, Aldair would not let you have his darling a penny less than five thousand a year. No, my dear Verdant, you must run for it. *Comprennez vous ?* run—elope—Gretna Green."

Philip started aghast at the daring proposal. But at that moment, further consideration of the subject was postponed by the entrance of an individual of so singular an appearance and deportment, that the young men set down their glasses and burst into a fit of uncontrollable laughter.

He was a tall, gaunt man, broad-shouldered, and erect ; with something of a military expression of carriage, which was sadly at variance with his grotesque dress, his shy face and timid, dreamy eyes. He had no beard or moustache, but compounded for these manly ornaments by a mass of straggling iron grey hair, which fell over his forehead and eyes when he removed his hat with a suddenness of so many wire springs. All the efforts he made to clear his dark dreamy eyes of this obstruction were of no avail, and he remained bowing blindly, with one hand combing back the refractory locks, the other waving his battered hat. Alaric nodded kindly and motioned his eccentric visitor to a seat.

"Thank ye, sir. I have na time to spare just noo. A letter, sir, from the young leddie. Will ye see if it's recht ? "

Alaric eagerly opened the note. It contained only a few lines, yet he looked long at it as if unable to fully comprehend its import.

"It is quite right, Mr. Kannyman. There is no answer required," he said at length, placing the missive abstractedly in a pocket-book, that was bulky enough to have belonged to the great Bellhaven-street merchant himself.

Mr. Kannyman was too busily engaged with his perverse looks to notice what Alaric said, so he had to repeat the words a second time

"Eh ? Aye," gasped the messenger, rousing himself as if

about to go. But he immediately subsided into what seemed his natural state, diligently combing back his hair from his clouded face.

Alaric exhibited no surprise at his visitor's eccentricity ; he merely explained to Philip casually, as he sipped his champagne :

"This is Mr. Kannyman. A Scotch gentleman of reduced circumstances and a good friend of mine,"

"Que c'est un drôle ami," remarked Philip, with a slight curl of the lip.

"Don't sneer, Monsieur ; it is an honest friend. And you need not use a language you do not perfectly understand. There is no fear of Mr. Kannyman hearing anything that is not most explicitly addressed to him." Then, turning to the subject of his remark, he said for the third time. "There is no answer, Mr. Kannyman. You may go."

"Eh ? Aye," replied he of the dreamy eyes. "I beg your pardon, I was thinking—thinking."

He slowly rose, and bowing abstractedly the while, he gathered his shaggy hair in his great hand, and confining its vagaries under the battered old hat, he backed against the door post and out of the room, leaving Philip to marvel more than ever at his friend's equivocal and mysterious acquaintance.

"There is a man," Alaric observed, "who, like the parrot in the story, is always thinking and never doing ; he'll die with all his music in him. You, my lad, are always dreaming and never doing. I fear your dream will prove as barren as his wisdom. Aye, Philip," continued his senior and admonitory friend, who by this time was growing eloquent, under the influence of his fifth glass, "Believe me, I have known some men—with generous impulsive natures like yours—men with talent and energy, that might have brought a blessing to themselves and to others, but their lives have had no goal in view, and all their actions have proved but the seeds of curses to spring up by and by, choking all the ways of life with thorns and briers."

There was something in his manner so sad and earnest, that Philip felt that he was speaking of himself, and he thought, what some few had suspected before him, "What if

this man's wild mirth and his ever ready smile be but the disguises of some silent misery hidden in his heart ? ”

“ Celini,” he said, abruptly breaking silence, “ I am leaving England.”

“Leaving England ? ” cried Philip. “ What's the matter now ? Why did you not tell me this before ? ”

“ Because I did not know if it were imperative till now.”

“ And where are you going ? ”

“ I can hardly say. Paris first ; then, perhaps, Italy.”

“ And when do you propose returning ? ”

“ I don't know ; perhaps never. Ask me no more. I cannot answer you.”

Philip clasped his friend's hand—the truest friend he had ever had.

“ God bless you, Mr. Fane, wherever you go,” he said.

“ Come, don't be down-hearted, old fellow,” cried Alaric. “ Consider how near you are to the consummation of your happiness, and be cheerful for your own sake, and,” he added, softening his voice and speaking very earnestly, “ for Emily Aldair's.”

Next morning Alaric Fane had shut up his house by the river side, and was far away, to-day drinking at Paris, next week gambling at Baden, then climbing snowcapped Alps, and again sunning himself in the streets of Rome, soon to move onward again to Florence, Naples, Athens, unresting ever ; and Philip Celini was walking swiftly down a Teddington lane on a visit to the Cotton's and Emily Aldair.

But Emily was a prisoner at her grandfather's house, a hundred miles away, thinking distractedly of her swiftly nearing marriage morn.

CHAPTER XXV.

MR. KANNYMAN.

WE MUST now return to the old man whose dreamy presence interrupted the last chapter.

With long swift steps Mr. Kannyman pursued his way, and in less than an hour and a half he halted under the shadow of St. Pancras Church. There he was speedily joined by a tall, graceful woman, who despite her thick veil we have no difficulty in recognizing as our long lost Pearl.

“ Is it all right ? ” she asked.

"Aye, it's a' recht."

"You are very good, Mr. Kannyman."

"Nae, nae ; I had some business the way, lassie."

"You are sure Mr. Fane read the note ?"

"Aye, lassie."

"Tell me, how did he look—was he drinking ?"

"Weel, mebbe the gentleman had just a wee drappee in the eye."

"Tell me the truth ; that is really what I sent you for ?"

"Weel then, lassie, he was just drinking as usual."

"She sighed, and drew her veil closer over her face. Is there any other news ?" she asked.

The old fellow took off his hat, and raked back his hair, in order to get a clearer view of the dark anxious eyes that were watching him thorough the veil.

"Naething good. The master has found out where ye are, I reckon ; for he told me last night not to waste more time lookin' for ye. He is as knowing as the deil, lassie, and as black. Hae naething to do with him, my birdie."

He spoke with so much kindness, that Pearl removed her veil the better to see him, and perhaps because she knew it pleased the old man to look at her beautiful young face.

He gazed long and earnestly into the dark lustrous eyes, fuller and darker than his own.

"What is it, Mr. Kannyman," she asked.

"Naething, lassie ; I was only thinking."

There was something very mysterious and secret about this man. If you watched those dreamy eyes of his, that seemed so vacantly staring into immensity, you would sometimes catch sight of a strange gleam of keen intelligence that lit up his face like a flash of lightning, as sudden, swift, and vivid. There was kindness too, hidden beneath the deep lines of care and age. And his manners, though so abstracted, and occasionally grotesque, had sometimes a quiet grace and refinement about them that was singularly at variance with his mean dress and rude dialect.

Pearl thanked him and wished him good day with a conflicting look of gratitude and distrust.

He watched her disappear, with his usual dreamy stare, then walked away with the same swift pace as before.

I wonder if it ever occurred to those who knew him what a singular thing it was that so dreamy a man should habitually walk so fast. If I were that old man's enemy I would be very careful how I acted in the presence of those same vacant eyes—they might see more than one thinks for.

He stopped at a dreary house, in a dreary street near Brunswick Square, on the door of which was a brass plate with the name of Mr. A. Moss, Jun. and in the dirty window a wire blind, with the word "Office" on it. The whole house looked empty and unfurnished, except for this office, where a tall desk rising above the blind, and a formidable row of fat ledgers and diaries, ranged full in sight, gave the casual passer indications of very extensive and lucrative business indeed.

Mr. Kannyman entered with a latch key, and immediately mounted a tall office stool and plunged into folios of figures.

He was so dutifully engaged when a timid ring of the tinkling little bell startled him from his perch.

"Eh. What d'ye want, ma'am?" he asked, sharply, of a neatly dressed young woman, who stood trembling on the doorstep.

She was a timid little thing, with a fair characterless face, that looked as if it might have been very pretty but for its misery.

"Is Mr. Moss here?" she stammered.

"Nae, I told ye before he seldom comes here now—and varra uncertin."

"Will you take him a letter?" she asked, or rather begged.

"Nae, lassie; that is no good." I saw him burn the last unopened."

As he spoke the woman was looking eagerly up into his face. Perhaps she saw something there more commiserating than his words.

"Oh, sir, do help me, and God will bless you."

"I am afeard I canna help ye, lassie," he said, softly, as he led her in and closed the door. He brought her a chair, and when she was more composed, he said, "Tell me all about it, lassie?"

She again looked into the old man's wrinkled face, and obeying that strange intuitive faculty of the miserable, which, like the Ancient Mariner's, enables them at a glance to recognize

the man who must hear their tale, the woman poured into his ear the whole history of her wretchedness.

She had been nursery governess in a family, which Mr. Moss visited—Mr. Aldair's, of Kensington. In an evil hour she met him alone, and listened to his flattering words. They met again and again. She learned to love him—too well.

Her betrayer persuaded her to leave her situation, and he supported her till a child was born. Fearing that the story should come to the ears of his friends, he persuaded her to put the child away to nurse, promising that she should see it whenever she wished.

"Here, in this room," she concluded, "I parted with her, my darling Edith, and he has never let me see her since. And now he will not speak to me; he says I have forfeited his love. God knows how, unless by growing prematurely old in misery. Oh it is cruel! cruel!"

"Dinna cry, lassie," said Mr. Kannyman, wiping his own eyes, under pretence of clearing them of his wild hair—this old Scotchman had pity in him too—"Dinna cry, lassie, I tell ye. I will try to find your bairn."

"She was yet thanking him, with all the extravagant effusion of a mother's heart, when Mr. Moss himself entered the office. He started at sight of her, and turned to retire, but she sprang on him with the energy of despair, crying aloud for her child. But he shook her off fiercely—brutally, and raised his foot, as if he would have spurned her as she lay on the threshold.

"What the H——business have you here, you whining hypocrite?" he shouted.

"My child, my child," she groaned.

"What have I to do with your child or you? Hold your row, and don't make a fool of yourself. Who is to know you have disgraced yourself if you hold your cursed tongue? Be off; if I catch you here again I'll split on you to your old mother I will, you shameless strumpet."

He closed the door, locked it, and turned fiercely on his clerk, who stood listlessly looking on; his great dreamy eyes almost hidden by the straggling hair.

"Oh, you cunning old devil, this is how you do your work, is it? Listening to the lies of a parcel of——" He shook his fist threateningly, but he did not strike him. For Mr. Kanny-

man was a strong, sinewy old man, and his great fists had suddenly contracted, and his weird black eyes were flashing in an altogether novel and incomprehensible manner.

"What? you scoundrel."

"Naething, master, naething. I was only thinking," replied the old man, turning dreamily to his ledger, muttering again to himself the last word, "thinking."

CHAPTER XXVI.

MR. KANNYMAN IS INQUISITIVE.

EARLY next morning, while the sun was yet trying to look over the house tops, to see what men were doing in the dusty street, Mr. Kannyman glided into his office, and locked the door behind him. He was two hours before his usual time, but that was nothing to a man of the multifarious duties of Mr. Moss's clerk. He did not open the shutters, because the daylight was yet so dim that for minute and careful work a candle was preferable, and this Mr. Kannyman had provided. There was an acute and watchful look in the old fellow's eyes this morning, and his hair had somehow contrived to set with an unwonted current towards his shoulders, revealing a capacious and thoughtful forehead. Carefully shading the light with his hands, he proceeded to the great iron safe, the sanctum sanctorum of Mr. Moss's office. Had that gentleman possessed the gifts of clairvoyance, he would have been not a little surprised to see his dreamy old factotum take from his pocket a great, bright, many-warded key, the exact counterpart of the one which, so far as he knew, had never been out of his possession for a minute. No, it was not exact; it grated in the lock, and the heavy bolts rolled half-way back, but no further. But a few touches of a small file remedied the defect, and the iron door swung open. Mr. Kannyman set down the light, in order to examine more carefully the various contents of the compartments. There were books, parchments, and legal papers tied up with pink tape, a cash box, two or three books of questionable character, and more questionable illustrations, all of which the surreptitious clerk passed negligently over. On the cold iron floor lay several dusty bottles, glasses, plates, knives and forks, and other unusual contents of an official iron safe.

"And so," said Mr. Kannyman, "these are the important items he consults when he stays here after business hours. Eh! What's this?" He had drawn from the furthest recess a small bright saw, such as are used for cutting keyholes and fretwork. Then came a hammer, a chisel, and a paper of blunt headless nails. He examined all these carefully, and replaced them with a perceptible shudder. His eyes were very wide awake now. Their expression was more horrified than dreamy. So unusually awake was he, that the candle was extinguished by his rapid movements. When he relighted it, his face was perfectly white, as if the momentary darkness had frightened him. Moving more cautiously now, he stooped and minutely examined the floor of the office. The wood was very old, and had been patched and repaired in many places, every one of these patches Mr. Kannyman minutely scrutinized, scraping the crevices and nails with his penknife. Whatever he sought, he seemed disappointed, and at length gave up the quest, put out the candle, and opened the shutters.

The sun had climbed over the opposite houses, and the cheerful light came streaming in, almost blinding the old man with its brightness. It glittered on the brass ornaments of the iron safe, it dazzled on the red and white backs of the ledgers, it danced on the fluttering blind, it streamed on the wall, it slept on the floor. When Mr. Kannyman stooped to pick up a sheet of paper that had fallen down from the tall desk to his feet, its snowy whiteness so dazzled his sight, that he missed his aim, and so tore his finger on a protruding nail that the thick drops of blood fell upon the paper.

"Eh!" he ejaculated and, falling on his knees, he resumed his scrutiny of the woodwork. Immediately beneath his stool was a patch a little newer and whiter than the rest. He had not thought of examining this before, for he distinctly remembered that piece being let into the floor some twelve-months ago, when the boards worn by his own and his predecessors' feet had broken through.

But the nail. Yes; here it was just sticking up a sixteenth of an inch above the wood. He examined the others—they were all level with the surface and very bright. But Mr. Kannyman turned pale again as he felt them. A carpenter does not leave his nails level, but punches them down beneath

the surface. He looked at his watch—it was only nine. He again opened the iron safe and took out the har chiseld. One vigorous wrench of his strong hand tore the plank from its place. What was this ; two of the rafters had been sawn through—he removed them, and scraped the earth with his fingers. Pah, what a sickening stench—and what was this again, lime? He scooped deeper down with his trembling fingers, and then—

The great drops of perspiration stood on his ghastly face, and he shook in every limb as he hurriedly smoothed over the earth and lime and stamped the board firmly into its place. In less than five minutes he had swept the dust over it as it had been before, replaced the chisel in the dark recess of the safe, and was out in the street gliding with swift long strides towards the private residence of Mr. Moss.

The marble dial in the breakfast room struck ten as the servant ushered him into his employer's presence. Mr. Moss threw the office keys at his feet without looking from his newspaper. The old man picked them up, but did not retire.

"What are you waiting for, sir?" asked Mr. Moss, when he perceived him.

"I promised Mrs. Ogle her new lease by ten this morning, and she will be here with her surety."

"She can't have it. It is in the iron safe, and I can't come to open it till four o'clock."

Mr. Kannyman worked hard all that day, balancing accounts with unusual care. He had moved his stool from its usual place nearer the light, where his employer found him when he called in the afternoon.

"What's this?" cried Mr. Moss, picking up from the floor the sheet of paper with the bloodstains on it; but before the dreamy old clerk had time to answer he had crumpled it up in his hand and held it blazing over the sealing jet. As the last corner of it calcined up in his fingers he caught sight of Mr. Kannyman's black eyes glaring out under his shaggy brows full and fearless on his own white face. But their fierce light seemed to go out with the burning paper, and he was again the dreamy old man poring over his books.

(To be continued.)

A DISTINGUISHED VISITOR.

LITTLE MOZART IN LONDON.

NOWADAYS we do things—some things—very thoroughly. There are always plenty of people ready to tell us what we do inadequately or not at all, but I think we scarcely get the credit that is our due in certain matters wherein we labour most conscientiously and unceasingly until the task is accomplished. When I say “we” thus familiarly, I mean of course that small but indefatigable contingent which makes these matters its especial study and delight, and I am thinking just now of the contingent of biographers and historians. In a biography of the present day there is apt to lurk a thoroughness which is almost appalling, and no class of literature is given to the world with such incontinent, and, as some complain, indecent haste. Scarcely has an eminent man vanished from the scene of his eminence, occasionally even before his race is fully run, but in almost every case, long before the daisies have had a chance of softening the ugliness of that poor heap of clods, which tells among us that another, eminent or obscure, is gone over to the majority, an announcement appears of the forthcoming “Life,” and we may think ourselves lucky if we get only a “Selection” of “letters” to boot. And so often what “a life!” The biographer holds nothing sacred; omnivorous is he and ruthless. He cannot even content himself with applying Chesterfield’s maxim, “Approfondissez—go to the bottom of things,” but when actually arrived at the bottom must needs grub about and stir up until everything becomes turbid. Our historians are not much better. They cannot let the bloody Marys and stolid Georges of past ages rest in peace, and are not happy unless they can contrive to rake up musty records and triumphantly confute all that previous writers have laboured to say on the subject. It used to be said that we must go to Germany for thoroughness in any branch of literature, but for a downright

nothing-omitting everything-exposing pitiless biography or history commend me to a man who lives within easy reach of Paternoster Row. Talking of Germany and biographies, probably one of the best and fairest "lives" ever written is that of Mozart by Otto Jahn, though, for some unaccountable reason, it is not that, I believe, but another which has been lately deemed worthy to appear in an English dress. Jahn is wonderfully full without ever being offensively personal, and he has succeeded in recording in one or other of his four fat volumes all or nearly all that can be gleaned of his gifted countryman's history. Not quite all, however; for in the Mozarteum, or Mozart Museum, at Salzburg, certain notes are preserved which throw a little light on that, to us, especially interesting period of his life, the period, namely, of his visit to England. These few little scraps have, so far as I know, never yet been published to the world, and considering that the Mozart family remained in this country for no less than fifteen months—*i.e.*, from April 10th, 1774, till the end of July, 1765, and that the generally known particulars of their residence here are contained for the most part in a single letter read before the Royal Society at least four years after their departure, I may, perhaps, be excused for fancying that some notice of them will be welcomed by all *Mozartsverehrer*.

First, then, there is an amusing account of the passage from Calais to Dover. In those days there was no Castalia, and the sailing-packets were as likely as not to take half the day to get across. On this occasion the elements were not favourable. Mozart *père* appears to have been very seasick, which did not vex his soul very much, and to have had a good round sum to pay for the transportation of himself and family, which vexed it considerably. However, they all reached London in the fulness of time, father, mother, son, and daughter—that "Nannerl" whose name must always be connected indissolubly with her brother's. "The first night," says Leopold the father, "we spent at the White Bear, and the next day we moved into our lodgings at Mr. Couzin's, *Hare* cutter, in Cecil Court, Martin's Lane." Speaking of their first reception at Court, he continues:—"The favour extended to us by both their Majesties is indescribable; their kindly behaviour scarcely allowed us to believe

that they really were the King and Queen of England. We have met with extraordinary politeness at all the Courts we have visited, but what we have experienced here beats every thing. A week ago we were walking in St. James's Park, and although we none of us had on the same clothes as when they last saw us, they recognised us and nodded, and not only that, but the king let down the carriage window, and putting out his head, smiled and greeted us, especially Master Wolfgang, with nods and waves of the hand."

Master Wolfgang's father was a very precise person, wrote the neatest of hands, and made a great point of noting down whatever was in the least degree likely to prove useful in time to come. It is to this careful propensity that we owe the subjoined list of his London patrons and acquaintances, no less amusing than it is explicit:—

Le Roy et la Reine, S. James's Park in Queen's Palace.

Mr. Milord Eglinton.

Mr. Milord March.

M. L'Ambassadeur de Danemarck, Bothman, in Great Marlborough Street.

Mr. Lord Fitzmoriz, Dover Street.

Duches de Hamilton.

Duches of Ancaster in Barckley Square.

My Lady Haringthon et sa très jolie familie, Stable-yard, S. James's Park.

Mr. Kirckman, Pianoforte Maker, Broad Street, Golden Square.

Milord Thanet, Grosvenor Square.

Doctor Arne and his son, composers.

Miss Brent
Miss Young } singing womans.

Lady Clive, Berkley Square,

Mr. Randal, in Five-field Row, in Chelsea, and his wife and children, with whom we stayed seven weeks, viz., from August 6th till Sept—th.

Mr. William Groote, Apothecary and Chymist, the Corner of Nassau Street, St. Ann's, Soho.

I have retained his own spelling and grammar, where he has written in English, translating where the notes are in his native language. It is interesting to observe who were the

patrons and patronesses of musical art in those days. All trace, I am afraid, of Mr. Couzin, the *Hare* cutter, in Cecil Court, has disappeared long since, but the name of Kirckman, anglicized into Kirkman, still remains in high repute, and it is pleasant to find the name of our own favourite, Dr. Arne, included in the list of those who probably did homage to little Mozart and his sister.

Besides these notes and jottings, there is also to be seen in the Mozarteum a newspaper, about eight inches by five in size of page, and rejoicing in the comprehensive title of "Extract-Schreiben *oder* Europaeische Zeitung." It is the number for August 6th, 1765, and contains the following paragraph, headed "London, 5th July." It is worth translating at length :—

"The famous pianoforte-maker of this city, Burkard Tchudy, a Swiss by birth, lately had the honour of making for His Majesty the King of Prussia a piano with two rows of keys, which is much admired by all who have seen it. It has been noticed by everybody as something quite out of the common, that Dr. Tchudy has connected all the keys with a single pedal in such a way that the *crescendo* and *decrescendo*, which pianists have so long been desiring, can be produced at will. Dr. Tchudy, too, was clever enough to get his wonderful instrument played for the first time by the most wonderful performer in the world, namely the seven or nine-year-old professor, Wolfgang Mozart, the marvellously gifted son of the Salzburg Capellmeister Leopold Mozart, and already as famous throughout Germany and France as he now is here. It was something quite entrancing to hear this little virtuoso's sister, only fourteen years of age, play with astounding facility the most difficult sonatas, while her brother accompanied her, improvising, on another piano. They both do wonders. The British Museum has not only begged for copies of the sonatas already published in Paris and London as well as for portraits of this talented family, to add to its remarkable collection of curiosities, but has also received at its own urgent request some original MSS. by this little genius, among them a little chorus for four voices with English words."

So runs the "Europaeische Zeitung," and remains, now

yellow with years, the solitary representative of Salzburg journalism, a hundred and twenty years ago, yet still eight inches by five and as important and affable to "our readers" as ever, while those whom it sought to celebrate, Wolfgang and "Nannerl," have long since carried their music elsewhere.

Probably the only record of the residence of the Mozarts in England, at all familiar to English readers is that contained in the "Philosophical Transactions," vol.lx., for the year 1770, No. 8, pp., 54 sqq. But people are not much given to reading Philosophical Transactions, and it may well be that even this account with the interesting incidents therein described is little known. Jahn, however, with that far-reaching thoroughness prevailing, as I said above, among biographers, has not suffered it to escape him, indeed prints it *verbatim* in his "life." One or two extracts will serve our purpose here. It is entitled "Account of a very remarkable young musician. In a letter from the Hon. Daines Barrington, F.R.S. to Matthew Maly, M.D., Sec. R.S., Received Nov. 28, 1769. Read Febr. 15, 1770. This was the Daines Barrington to whom so many of Gilbert White's letters are addressed. He seems to have been somewhat sceptical as to the age of the two children, and even went the length of writing to Salzburg for Wolfgang's certificate of birth or baptism (probably the latter), before he could be convinced that the father had not imposed upon him, when he asserted that the lad was but eight years old. Determined as a true Briton to see that there was no humbug about it, Mr. Barrington put Wolfgang's genius to the severest test he could devise, placing before him a MS. duet, which it was absolutely impossible that he could ever have seen before. The score was in five parts, viz: accompaniments for two violins, the two vocal parts, and a bass, the vocal parts being written in the contralto clef, while the others of course were in the treble and bass respectively.

But Mozart was not to be beaten: he first played the symphony in what the writer of the account calls "a most masterly manner," and then proceeded without hesitation to attack the duet itself, taking the upper line himself, while his father sang the lower. His voice of course was

weak and childish, but "nothing," we read, "could exceed the masterly manner in which he sung." The father on the other hand was occasionally "out," and then the son would look back "with some anger," and set him right. He also threw in the violin accompaniments wherever effective. Mr. Barrington cannot find words in which to express his own amazement, or the enormous difficulty of the task. Finally, he endeavours to explain the latter by the following sufficiently perplexing comparison: "Let it be imagined," he says, "that a child of eight years old was directed to read five lines at once, in four of which the letters of the alphabet were to have different powers. For example, in the first line, A to have its common power, in the second that of B, in the third that of C, in the fourth of D. Let it be conceived also, that the lines so composed of characters with different powers are not ranged so as to be read at all times one exactly under the other, but often in a desultory manner. Suppose, then, a capital speech in Shakespeare, never seen before, and yet read by a child of eight years old with all the pathetic energy of a Garrick. Let it be conceived, likewise, that the same child is reading, with a glance of the eye, three different comments on this speech, tending to its illustration, and that one comment is written in Greek, the second in Hebrew, and the third in Etruscan characters. Let it be also supposed, that by different signs he could point out which comment is most material upon every word, and sometimes that perhaps all three are so, at others only two of them. When all this is conceived, it will convey some idea of what the boy was capable of, in singing such a duet at sight in a masterly manner, throwing in at the same time all its proper accompaniments."

He was next tried with equally remarkable results, in *extempore* playing, and Mr. Barrington institutes a comparison between him and other youthful prodigies; such as Handel, and one John Barratier, which latter "is said to have understood Latin when he was but four years old, Hebrew when six, and three other languages at the age of nine." He comes to the conclusion that little Mozart is the most precocious of all. Though a genius, however, he was still a child, and on one occasion, "whilst he was playing, a

favourite cat came in, upon which he immediately left his harpsichord, nor could we bring him back for a considerable time." So, too, "he would also sometimes run about the room with a stick between his legs by way of a horse." Nor was as yet his young life embittered by that jealousy among the brethren of the craft which doubtless was one of the main causes of his early death. On the contrary all musicians whom he met, whether amateur or professional, appear to have done willing homage to the little Master. Even Joh. Christ. Bach himself, the youngest son of the great John Sebastian, and teacher of music to the Queen, noticed him most affably, and on one occasion took him on his lap and played a sonata with him, each taking a certain number of bars in turn.

We can then easily understand the father's proud feeling when he wrote at about this time: "You can form no idea of it. What he knew when we left Salzburg is just nothing by the side of what he knows now." And again, "'Tis enough that my girl is one of the cleverest performers in Europe, for all she is but twelve years old, and that the giant (*grossmächtige*) Wolfgang, with his eight years, knows all that could be looked for in a man of forty."

During his stay in England Mozart wrote six Sonatas with accompaniments for violin or flute, and dedicated them to Queen Charlotte: he also composed several orchestral symphonies, which "Nannerl" with her nimble fingers had to copy out for him.

And this is all that remains on record of our "distinguished visitor" while on English soil. He stayed, indeed, for some weeks, if not months, near Canterbury, but the name of his host has not been handed down to us.

And there is but one further incident to mention, if indeed it be admissible at all, inasmuch as it had no connection with the visit to England. Nevertheless here it is. Lange, Mozart's brother-in-law, the actor and artist, made a sketch of the musician's ear, and by the side of it painted an ordinary ear. This sketch is in the possession of Herr F. X. Jelinek, Curator of the Mozarteum. Under the two ears, may be read in Mozart's handwriting, "Mein Ohr" and "Ein gewöhnliches Ohr" respectively. The word "Mein" has

been scratched out and Mozart's" substituted by Lange. The most noticeable feature of Mozart's ear, according to the sketch, was its extreme flatness to the head, which doubtless accounts for the extraordinary sensitiveness of that organ in him.

Here, then, I will leave our little visitor, having, I hope, placed on record a few additional details respecting him, which, if insignificant in themselves, will nevertheless perhaps be read with pleasure by those, and they must be many, who are ready to welcome any thing new concerning that greatest of all musical prodigies, who began life under such happy auspices, and yet after barely reaching "*il mezzo cammino della nostra vita*" was, practically, worried to death, and was buried, like Moses, no one knows where. In the midst of the petty jealousies and professional unkindnesses which marred his later years, he must have often looked back with fond regret to the days of his boyish triumphs and unclouded happiness, when under the hospitable roof of Mr. Couzin, *Harc Cutter*, Cecil Court, Martin's Lane.

ARTHUR GAYE, M.A.





WHAT WILL SOCIETY SAY?

A NOVEL.

By MERVYN MERRITON.

Author of "Romances of the Chivalric Ages," "The Ringwoods of Ringwood," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WHAT Benjamin Screesman could, and did, do very quickly for Marie Duhamel was this. Without raising any question of conditions between Miss Fenton—the name Marie selected as her stage designation—and himself, he obtained for her several engagements for light performances with amateurs—the "Wandsworth Wanderers" among others—while at the same he prevailed upon Mr. Percy Waltham—an eminent professor of the dramatic art—to instruct her in the parts she played.

"I shall trust to your kindness to make the necessary pecuniary arrangements with Mr. Waltham on my behalf," Marie said to Screesman, after her third lesson.

"My dear Miss Fenton," replied Screesman, "Percy Waltham is an actor of the good old school. There was a time when we had a school of actors—Now, alas! But it's useless to grieve over what is irremediable. Waltham is indeed very nearly the last among us who possesses the great stage traditions. He is an enthusiast in his art. He is comparatively rich. He won't trouble himself with the instruction of unpromising pupils, or mere triflers in the profession. I tell you he won't have such at any price. I have known him return a blank cheque bearing the signature of a millionaire nobleman who wished him to bring out a—Well, I'll say, a handsome young lady, her chief aim being to make the stage a vehicle

for the display of her personal charms. You'll excuse my mentioning these things ; but I regret to say there are many such, to which you'll have to shut your eyes, on the stage—spots on the sun, you know! Well, Mr. Waltham tells me he deems it an honour to be entrusted with the stage education of an artist like yourself. His own words, I assure you, Miss Fenton. He won't listen to the question of money at present. Hereafter he will consent to whatever I, acting on your behalf, think just and proper."

When Heartly returned to London from Birmingham he heard with dismay of the step Marie had taken. He could hardly attribute this sudden decision to a mere wish for an all-absorbing occupation, and was unable to divest himself of the belief that Marie had been mainly actuated by a morbid desire to follow the profession previously embraced by Frank Aylesmere. Had Heartly been a more skilled analyzer of the female mind, or had Marie been more disposed to confide in him, he might have formed a more correct appreciation of the mental condition in which her decision had originated.

It will be remembered that, when asked to act as one of Juliana's bridesmaids, Marie had declined on the ground of professional occupation. She had not thought it necessary to define exactly what that occupation was. The reader shall be dealt with more confidentially than was Juliana.

By a curious coincidence, the day fixed for Juliana's marriage with Frank Aylesmere was that on the evening of which Miss Fenton made her first appearance before the genuine public of a London theatre.

This consummation, so devoutly wished no less by Marie herself than by Percy Waltham and Benjamin Screesman, was not attained till much hostility had been encountered, and many difficulties vanquished.

Screesman suggested a provincial engagement, "to rub off the edge," as he put it, of Miss Fenton's early performances.

Waltham, knowing that there was in her acting very little edge to rub off, took a contrary view, and set his heart upon at once producing his clever pupil before a London audience. By dint of much diplomatic proceeding, he at length laid the foundation of an engagement for her at the Folies Dramatiques, a theatre—its name, such being

the fashion, imported from Paris—just then rising into popularity. After many vicissitudes, it had recently become the property, report said, of “moneyed parties.” Probably “a moneyed party” would have been the more exact definition of the situation.

The management of the Folies Dramatiques was—in accordance with a prevailing mode—feminine. The lady holding the reins of government—and pretty tightly too—was known by the high-sounding name of Miss St. Lawrence—Hilda St. Lawrence, to give it according to her signature, though truth compels this chronicler to state that the patronymic attributed to her in the register of her native parish—St. Martin’s in the Fields—was Ann Tibbits.

Miss St. Lawrence was beyond all controversy a splendid woman. She was now in the very prime of woman’s age—place that where you will, ladies! Her education, begun only at sixteen, was simply what all education begun at sixteen must be! She had, however, traversed with almost providential success that *pons asinorum* of English pronunciation the letter H. As her chief, almost sole, reading had been in dramatic literature, and that not of the very highest order, it was not surprising that her conversation off the stage was always of the stage and stage matters. On the whole, however, loquacity was not her fault, for she had been taught that a loquacious demeanour was to be avoided as not savouring of high life. She had played all sorts of parts—serious—comic—musical, and had signally failed in all. As a matter of course, every piece, original or otherwise, brought out at her theatre was written up for her, and her only. Even the male characters were carefully pared down so as not to risk catching a scrap of applause when she was *en scène*. Bad as was her acting, execrable as was her singing, a single insertion only of all the puffs invented and circulated for her would have filled a large 8vo volume; her photographs (in various characters and stages of toilet) would have furnished a small gallery in themselves. The non-playgoing world, seeing her name thus unceasingly paraded, set her down as a woman of extraordinary ability; her carte de visite spoke for itself, and told no lies. Serious play-goers, unversed in managerial mysteries, wondered how so impossible an actress, even with all the

attractions of her person, could draw the houses she appeared to draw.

Play-goers for whom there were no theatrical secrets, knew perfectly well, firstly, that the fashionable and paying portion of the audience went, not to hear the actress, but to see the woman; secondly, that the pit and galleries were chiefly filled by free admissions lavishly distributed; thirdly, that the weekly losses of the establishment amounted to several hundred pounds; fourthly, that such loss was a matter of perfect indifference to the party financing the establishment—a member of the Upper Ten, who kept the theatre open as a bauble to amuse Miss Hilda St. Lawrence, and to parade his triumphs before “Society.”

It was immediately after an exceptionally bad piece—in which Miss Hilda St. Lawrence played even worse than usual—had, in the teeth even of one of those splendidly successful first nights so often recorded by paid or partial panegyrists, practically met with unmitigated damnation, that Percy Waltham seized the opportunity to make proposals to Mr. Glaskin, Miss St. Lawrence’s very able and very highly-paid stage manager and general theatrical adviser, for the engagement of “Miss Fenton, the very best pupil, my dear Glaskin, I have ever brought out!”

Mr. Glaskin, a personal friend of Waltham’s—the two were alking up and down the empty stage together, after the hearsal of the “cuts” and the “modifications” suggested for the salvation, if possible, of the new piece aforesaid—at once put this question fully expected, by the professor,

“Is your pupil good looking?”

“She is,” was the prompt reply, “more than good looking.”

“Not so handsome as our Directress?”

“Certainly not as handsome, but far more intellectually autiful.”

“Between ourselves, Percy, I don’t think our audiences are much carried away by intellectual beauty. Bring your young lady to-morrow. You shall interview Miss St. Lawrence at twelve. I think I can manage to get down to the theatre by that time. I’ll do my best.”

On the morrow, at the hour appointed, Marie and Percy Waltham were in attendance at the Folies Dramatiques.

Glaskin was awaiting them, as Waltham well knew he would be. Miss St. Lawrence was not yet at the theatre, as Waltham had foreseen she would not be.

Glaskin, he rightly judged, would wish to have the first word with Miss Fenton. This, in fact, was so much part of Glaskin's programme, that he had appointed the Directress for half-past twelve.

Waltham and Glaskin thoroughly understood one another, and each respected the other's judgment and sterling honesty.

"Miss Fenton has brought the book of——," Waltham said, naming one of the pieces she had studied; "Would you like to hear her on the stage?"

Glaskin would be charmed, etc, etc. He did hear her, and was more than charmed. Having freely expressed his admiration, he said slyly, "Percy, it will be better not to have anything of this sort"—pointing to the book—"before the Directress. It might—Ahem! militate against Miss Fenton's being engaged—you understand in what sense!"

Waltham understood perfectly the sense hinted at, and said, smiling, "Yes, people may be able to appreciate in others qualities which they do not possess themselves."

A little after half-past twelve, Miss St. Lawrence's stylish brougham and pair drew up at the stage-door of the theatre. The page having let her out, with train carefully raised over one arm she stepped across the pavement, dived into the murky passage, and after receiving the successive salaams of the pale-faced sleepy door-keeper, three haggard stage-carpenters, the gas-man, and the messenger who had the particular charge of her private room, ascended to that sanctum. She first rang her bell twice for her dresser. Having given this functionary an audience of ten minutes, she rang again once.

The messenger answered her summons.

"Anybody waiting, Sam?" she asked.

"Yes, 'm," Sam replied. "Mr. Percy Waltham with a lady; they're with Mr. Glaskin."

"You may say I'll see them, Sam!"

This announcement having been delivered with directorial solemnity and authoritativeness, Sam scuttled down the ladder-like stairs to the stage-manager's room.

Miss St. Lawrence availed herself of his departure to "touch up her cheeks just the least in the world," as she would have phrased the operation, before the looking glass. Then, spreading out her rich and rustling robe, she seated herself in her managerial chair, in front of the buhl table whereon, by a managerial fiction, she wrote her business letters.

Her reception of Percy Waltham may be described as a judicious mixture of the Hail-fellow-well-met with the I'm-monarch-of-all-I-survey !

Waltham's response was such as might have been expected from a man who might easily have been her father, who looked upon her, from the artistic point of view, with supreme contempt, who was the very pink of politeness—and who had a point to carry !

Miss St. Lawrence receiving Miss Fenton was simply one handsome woman receiving another for the first time. You all know, or guess, what that is, ladies !

Percy Waltham at once seized the rudder of conversation, and in terms as full of urbanity as the nature of his address would admit, gave the Directress to understand that he knew—as did all the theatrical world—her last piece to be a miserable failure ; that she could not possibly run it ; that she must either fall back upon one of her former doubtful successes, or offer the public some attractive novelty. Such a novelty, he went on to tell her, he held in his hand. She would, he was sure, not venture to dispute his judgment in such matters. He was, she must be aware, quite above imperilling any interests to further his own. There sat Miss Fenton ! Miss St. Lawrence could not do better than engage her. He would stake his reputation upon it that the engagement would advance the interests of the theatre quite as much as Miss Fenton's and his own.

During this address the two ladies' eyes had frequently wandered towards each other—they were, in fact, to use a phrase much in use, taking stock of one another. Miss Fenton admitted at once the sumptuous beauty of the Directress. Miss St. Lawrence, with equal readiness, acknowledged to herself the grace and charm that characterized the novice.

Had Waltham been so indiscreet as to let his pupil recite a part, Miss St. Lawrence, ignorant as she was, could not have failed to detect a possibly dangerous rival in the pupil. As it was she saw in her no more than an extremely pretty and elegant girl, whom that good kind old boy, Percy Waltham fancied to be a wonder, was, perhaps, if the truth were known, a little sweet upon, and wished to place in a theatre that was the fashion.

"What do you propose as Miss Fenton's line?" the Directress asked.

"Genteel comedy," Percy answered. "Besides, she's something of a musician."

"Oh! I don't mean to go in for music—except in the burlesques," Miss St. Lawrence cried sharply. "I suppose Miss Fenton can't engage for burlesques?"

"My dear Miss St. Lawrence," Waltham replied authoritatively, "She is in the first line of business—or none! But pray don't misunderstand me! I expect Miss Fenton to take with the public—I'm certain of it. Still I've no idea of asking you to place her in antagonism with yourself—I well know *that* won't suit the purpose of your theatre."

The word "antagonism" being clearly above Miss St. Lawrence's comprehension, he hastened to supplement it colloquially with, "I mean that it's to be understood she plays second fiddle to you."

"Of course—" with a little laugh—"Then you'll bring her out in a piece of her own, Mr. Waltham?"

"Yes; I have something in my eye for her—a short second piece. You might put up something else for yourself—new, if you can get it."

Miss St. Lawrence laughed again, this time rather bitterly, as she said, "I suppose you've read last Wednesday's 'Stinger.' It says of me the authors are getting tired of writing for me. It goes on to explain why—of course, you know, from the writer's point of view."

"I've read it," Percy said, "But I don't hold with the 'Stinger.' I think the authors can hardly object to having their pieces run on as you run them on—Ahem!"

Miss St. Lawrence was unable to penetrate the slight sarcasm conveyed by these words.

"Well, now," Waltham resumed, "as to conditions—and, by-the-by, Miss St. Lawrence, perhaps you'd like to have up Glaskin."

It is needless to follow the Directress, the stage manager, and Percy Waltham, into these details. Enough that Marie left the theatre, carrying with her articles of agreement, drawn out in due form, for an engagement to be signed by the high contracting parties on the following day.

CHAPTER XXX.

WITHIN a month after Miss Fenton's first appearance at the Folies Dramatiques, she was—in old theatrical parlance—the talk of the town.

She had scarcely played a dozen times when Glaskin, one day, said to Waltham, "I must give you a friend's warning—your pupil won't stay with us. She's much too good for us! I've called the reading of a new piece for the day after to-morrow—a good little piece enough—something from the French—done to order. She's in it—but *such* a part! She *must* refuse it. You can't allow her to play it; so, unless you intend her to figure in a court of law, she'll have to throw up her engagement."

"Thanks, dear boy—a thousand thanks for the hint. I know all about it. I've been prepared for something of the sort ever since her second night. Just tell me, now. Her talent is not her only defect— isn't it so?"

"Quite so, Percy—quite so. In confidence, she finds too much favour in the eyes of—a certain personage!"—he alluded to the member of the Upper Ten who financed the establishment—"to find any in the eyes of the Directress!"

"Ha! ha! ha!—I knew it would be so. I've provided for the event."

"Got another engagement ready?"

"In my mind's eye, Horatio. Tilson and Screesman are ready with any amount of offers. Two authors are pressing to write for her; but I intend her for the Legitimate."

"Ah! then it must be in the provinces. London has broken with the Legitimate, save spasmodically."

"You're right, Glaskin. Still my views are for London."

"Phew! Then you'll have to take a theatre yourself, and lose £500 a week."

"Not a bit of it. I've sounded—Well, never mind the party, but a strong one."

"Shakespeare?"

"Sheridan."

Glaskin shook his head silently, thinking "Poor old Percy! He has lost his wits. The deuce take those handsome pupils when a fellow has passed fifty!"

In conformity with the provisions of Glaskin and Waltham, Miss Fenton's engagement with the Folies Dramatiques was cancelled, by mutual consent, at the end of the first month. But that single month had laid the foundations of her career. The following month having been given to careful and unremitting study, she was pronounced by Waltham, and a few, friends who were in his confidence, to be ready for the crucial test of playing "Lady Teazle." In a very short time she was underlined for that part at the Pantechnic Theatre, supported by the best legitimate comedy company that could be got together in these illegitimate days. This attempt at the revival of Sheridan's masterpiece, at a considerable outlay, even under the most attractive circumstances, was deemed hazardous in the extreme by those most competent to give an opinion. The result proved at once their error and the capriciousness of the public taste. Miss Fenton's success was incontestible. The press spoke with remarkable unanimity on the subject. There were necessarily imperfections in her performance, the consequence at once of nervousness and inexperience; but she had the true dramatic inspiration, while her rare intelligence and artistic temperament enabled her to grasp with extraordinary readiness the spirit of her experienced master's teachings. Her bearing, marked by a judicious combination of self-confidence with *retenue* and great natural distinction, seemed that of one even more accustomed to the drawing-room atmosphere than she could really claim to be.

Percy Waltham, in his artist's enthusiasm, gave way to

almost boyish expression of satisfaction. Screechman, who had abandoned alcoholic potations for light claret, swallowed many bottles of that comparatively innocent beverage in her honour. The Pantechnic management, one having a serious sense of its responsibilities to the public and to art, insensible to back-stairs influence, eschewing crotchets, honestly endeavouring to earn money, not by stooping to the bad, but by aiming at the good in dramatic literature, perceived that a palpable hit had been made, and hastened to secure Miss Fenton's services for a longer period, and at a larger salary than had been originally contemplated. Royalty patronised the revival. Men of various categories—literary, artistic, noble, wealthy—sought the honour of an introduction to the new "Lady Teazle."

Our friend Abel Heartly was among the few—of course there were such—who viewed this triumph with regret. He saw in the adulation that followed the object of his simple, honest, but unspoken love, an ever-widening chasm between her and himself. Therein, never going behind the scenes himself, he was misled by his imagination; the true state of the case being that Miss Fenton's insensibility to the compliments showered upon her sufficed of itself to prevent further advances which might have been annoying to her.

The opinion generally expressed in the coulisses on this score was that a woman so attractive and with so little of the dragon about her as la Fenton, who at the same time repelled all admiration beyond such as was expressed in the dullest platitudes, must be privately married.

But married to whom? The only individual of the ruder sex ever seen with her was her old stepfather. Ella Barnstaple, the Ingénue of the company, who played "Maria" with her, a quiet, decent, well-mannered young girl, her only friend—as theatre friends go—in the theatre, and therefore an authority on the subject, confided to curious querists that Miss Fenton had never let fall a single word indicating the existence of a *secret de cœur*.

Claude Cotherstone, who has elsewhere described himself as a patron of the drama in a certain way, was necessarily attracted by Miss Fenton's fame. His intellect was up to the mark of appreciating her performance, and he admitted

that he found in it ample compensation for having swallowed his club dinner at half-past six in order to find himself seated in his stall at half-past seven. But who the deuce was this new "Lady Teazle?" A fine creature, by the Lord Couldn't for the life of him recollect where or when, was convinced he had seen her before! He must introduce her. And an introduction he did get. Was it possible? Miss Fenton one and the same with Duhamel!

His reception by "Lady Teazle" was not want of cordiality. She felt a certain satisfaction in renewing acquaintance with one who represented to her a link between the present and the past. Claude's manner—when it suited his purpose to throw off his swagger, his languor, his affectation—was the perfection of good taste. He was as full of *façade* as the Vicomte de Foix himself; nor did Marie fail to detect the wide difference between his former manner in addressing Marie Duhamel, the pianoforte teacher, and his present bearing towards Miss Fenton, the rising High Comedy actress.

"May I call and see you?" Claude asked. "I have much to wish to talk over our Middleshire friends."

Marie looked pleased, though she displayed none of the emotion which Claude had expected at the mention of Middleshire friends." She replied that she would be glad to receive his visit, as would Mr. Oldham, though not for more than a fortnight. They were about to move from their present residence in order to be nearer the theatre. Her address would in the future be No.—Torrington Square, a remote and somewhat inaccessible quarter Mr. Cotherstone would, no doubt, call on it—but then it was a good professional quarter.

Oh, yes! Mr. Cotherstone was perfectly aware that he was out of the way to some people. But he thought he was right in her choice. Brompton and Kensington were very sunny—more in the flower-bed and green-railing way than that sort of thing. But for serious theatrical work give him the part of the town she had chosen. His club—their club—his artistic club—the Garden—was not far from the part of the town. By-the-by he had dined there—rather hastily, too, in order to lose nothing of her performance.

—with D——, the dramatic author, and L——, the dramatic critic, both of whom had come to the theatre afterwards ; both, he need hardly say, being amongst her warmest admirers. He would, then, as Miss Duhamel—he begged pardon, he could hardly help calling her by a name so familiar to him from old associations—as Miss Fenton had kindly permitted him, call on her when she should be settled in Torrington Square.

It may be noted as a decided point in Claude Cotherstone's favour with Marie that he had been the first person to make her appreciate fully the species of sovereignty which, whatever Society may say, hedges round the representatives of high dramatic art above those of all other art.

The event of the hundreth and last performance of the "School for Scandal" at the Pantechnic was celebrated by a dinner which the management gave on the stage of the theatre to the private friends of its members and the supporters of the Drama. Oldham, of course, was present, and Marie obtained an invitation for Heartly. Sir R. A., one of the guests, the most fashionable portrait-painter of the day, who charged 500 guineas for his full-length portraits, and whose actual engagements it would require at least ten years to fulfil, solicited the honour of sketching her—of course *en camarade* ! She thanked him. The honour would be hers. She had already been taken by one of her most intimate friends—a rising artist she believed he was considered—Mr. Heartly. Might she be allowed to present Mr. Heartly to Sir R. A. ?

The courtly court painter would be delighted to know any friend of Miss Fenton, particularly so to make the acquaintance of Mr. Heartly, who was already known to him by reputation.

This introduction, which forthwith became a *fait accompli*, could not be otherwise than useful to Heartly. Here, then, was *la petite* Duhamel already appearing in the character of a patroness. But the kindly smile with which Marie crowned her small act of patronage sent a glow to the good fellow's heart such as he had not experienced for many a long day.

Was Marie's heart conscious in ever so small a degree of the electric shock thus communicated to his ?

That was the question.

The Pantechnic Company was about—such being now-a-days the mode—to proceed on an autumnal provincial tour, in the course of which various high-class plays were to be performed. In addition to the “School for Scandal,” “The Rivals,” “The Lady of Lyons,” “The Hunchback,” together with some of the older comedies. In all these Marie had already studied her parts with Percy Waltham.

The exact nature of Miss Fenton’s engagement with the Pantechnic not being generally known, and too many theatrical directions having of late become evanescent, and dependent on circumstances, it was quite in the order of things that rival candidates should be in the field for the possession of so great an attraction as Miss Fenton had proved herself. Two only of the managers who made proposals to Waltham for her are worth mentioning.

One was Mr. Tangent, a man of handsome fortune, a real *fanatico per la musica*, who kept a pet theatre, as other wealthy men keep a stud of race horses, half-a-dozen acres of hot-houses, a kennel of fox-hounds, and so on, for his own personal delectation. His pleasure consisted in listening to his own songs, sung to his own words, on his own stage ! He paid well for pieces, but they must be specialities. The piece might be a drama in three acts or a farce in one, as seemed good to the author, but the author must leave points at which *il fanatico* might work in songs—songs sentimental, songs comic, but all more or less dismal, and all doomed to be unsung save in his own theatre.

The second candidate was Mr. Moody, an author of reputation, and well to do in the world, who took theatres, here and there and everywhere, for the performance of his own and no other pieces. Not but what many of the pieces were good in themselves, nor was any fault to be found either in the artists engaged to play in them, or in the manner of putting them on the stage. But then—*Toujours Perdix !*

Apart from the fact that Miss Fenton was bound to the Pantechnic for twelve months certain, Waltham met Messieurs Tangent and Moody with the same “polite negative.” “For,” said he, speaking to Miss Fenton as he would occasionally speak, a trifle didactically, “in England theatrical enterprise necessarily comes within the scope of commercial specula-

tion. This has not an elevating or captivating sound as applied to a question of art. But what does it really mean? It means that we in England do not possess, as they do in France and elsewhere, institutions whereby it is sought, at the national cost, to maintain a high standard of national dramatic or lyric art. Individual enterprise is regarded as the source of our national supremacy in material matters; and as with railways, iron, and cotton, so with art, dramatic and lyric, the principle that holds is, 'Help yourselves, for the Government will not help you!' If, then, we are to have theatres, those theatres must be maintained by private enterprise. Private enterprise, to be profitable, must be conducted on the two strictly financial principles of deliberately and systematically providing customers with the most attractive article at the lowest remunerative price, and of not swerving from the system on which the enterprise has been originally founded, in favour of any private or personal views whatever. Now, establishments after the Tangent and Moody patterns, and of others that I could name, are but excrescences on the body of genuine theatrical enterprise; they are more or less costly playthings, and the playthings of grown men are equally liable with those of young children to be fitfully or unreflectingly thrown aside. It is, therefore, in my humble opinion, not to theatrical undertakings of this last description that actors and actresses who make a serious business of their profession ought to attach themselves."

CHAPTER XXXI.

NOVEMBER was drawing to a close. The shooting party, rendered memorable by Frank's narrow escape in that "hot corner," had separated. Claude Cotherstone, however, still lingered at Lentworth Hall. A day had been fixed for his departure to fulfil a, then even, overdue visit to Lord Windlesham; but he had subsequently received a letter from his brother, asking him to delay the visit for another week. So at least he said!

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As he had made himself popular in the house, his stay was generally welcomed. In Mrs. Leadstone's opinion his presence was a sort of aristocratic emanation. She liked to talk to him in such phrases as, "The meaning Lord Battleborough, "would no doubt approve your sentiments," or, "I should like to know what the Countess—Lady Battleborough of course," would think of this, that, or the other question, as if (Mrs. Leadstone) were already acquainted with those persons. Indeed it was the height of her ambition to acquire an acquaintance—an end which the Countess's Honour had obscurely hinted he might be "able to bring about in the course of next season."

Claude evinced no less of friendship for Frank himself than of respectful admiration and brotherly regard for Frank Aylesmere's lovely wife. He was endowed with a remarkable facility of adapting, at command, his habits to those of the persons around him, that he ingratiated himself with, and disarmed the suspicions of the rough Squire. "A clever, shrewd fellow, and no less so than your Honourable Claude ;" he would say to his wife, "I've come across a deal more about land and timber than most of the people I've come across." But he would add, "Pity he has spent his life through life doing nothing for himself." It was, however, that the person in question was at this time doing, or at least planning to do, a good deal for his country in a certain way.

Frank had not yet sufficiently recovered from the effects of his accident to get on horseback. Juliana liked the weather was pleasantly mild, and the Squire being, from his multifarious occupations, rarely at his disposal, it fell to the lot of Claude—the envied one—to escort Mrs. Aylesmere in her rides.

One morning at breakfast, Mrs. Leadstone, while looking through the county paper, exclaimed, "What a pity! Saville was quite wrong. She told me the Middlesex Theatre was not to open till the middle of December. I had better announce—Oh ! it's only for three performances." She then went on to read : "Mr. Gainsborough's celebrated Italian Opera Company. For three nights only."

"Gainsborough ! How is the name spelt ?" Frank asked.

"Like the great painter's. Do you know this manager ?" Mrs. Leadstone made this demand rather pointedly.

Frank, with a slight hesitation of manner, answered that he knew him very well. In fact, Mr. Gainsborough, it will be remembered, was the manager who, in theatrical parlance, had brought Frank out as Mr. Philip Francis. Of late, however, Frank had so completely lost sight of all theatrical movements as not to be aware that Mr. Gainsborough was the principal personage in the partnership constituting the Pantechnic management.

Claude knew nothing of Gainsborough's provincial antecedents, nor the nature of his former relations with Frank, but he well knew his present relations with Miss Fenton, of whose identity with Marie Duhamel, by-the-by, he had been careful never to breathe a word at Lentworth. He now saw at a glance that an opportunity was within reach for the advancement of certain sinister views of his own.

"Any names given of the performers ?" he asked.

"Three," Mrs. Leadstone answered. "The first is Miss Fenton."

Claude looked round.

In every countenance there was the most blank indifference.

"The two other names," Mrs. Leadstone proceeded, "are Mr. Downing and Mr. Smith-Elliston."

The latter name was familiar to Frank. He remembered Smith-Elliston—who boasted to be related to "Gentleman Elliston," in the northern theatres—as a man of education and ability, but of a stiff and ungraceful bearing—a specimen of what the late John Harley used to call the Tea-pot school—one arm, planted on the hip, forming the handle, the other, held rigidly aloft, representing the spout.

"Are the pieces announced ?" Claude asked.

"Only for the first night," Mrs. Leadstone said. Then she read, "To-morrow the 'School for Scandal,' as performed with the greatest success for nearly two hundred successive nights in London. 'Lady Teazle,' Miss Fenton ; 'Sir Peter Teazle,' Mr. Downing ; 'Charles Surface,' Mr. Smith-Elliston. To conclude with the popular farce of 'Raising the Wind.' Between the comedy and the farce Miss Fenton

will execute a fantasia on one of Broadwood's grand pianofortes, supplied by the house of Banjo and Co. of this town."

"Advertisement for Banjo and Co," observed the Squire. "The people who tuned your instrument, Juliana."

"I say, Frank, why shouldn't you and I go over and see the fun to-morrow night?" asked Claude, carelessly.

"Why shouldn't we all go?" added Mrs. Leadstone, eagerly.

"Oh! if you ladies think it worth the trouble?" said Claude.

"I'm sure, Mr. Cotherstone, I should think it no trouble," Mrs. Leadstone hastened to say. "What do you think about it, Juliana?"

"I'll do just what Frank wishes," was Juliana's reply, given rather coldly.

"Then the question is, what does Frank wish?"

"I'll vote with the majority." Frank also threw a certain indifference into his answer.

"Then it's settled," broke in the Squire, taking the newspaper; "for I'll vote with Mrs. Leadstone and Mr. Cotherstone, which at once makes a majority. I see the doors open at 'alf after six, performance begins at seven. Rather early, to be sure. Stay—Tell ye what we'll do—Drive over in the afternoon—Dine quiet and comfortable at the George, then go across to the theatre, not two minutes' walk."

Mr. Cotherstone highly approved the proposal. Mrs. Leadstone, of course, thought exactly as Mr. Cotherstone did. Frank and Juliana mildly assented, and the plan was considered to be adopted. A certain indifference, which had characterised the demeanour of both Frank and Juliana, had not escaped Claude's notice. The origin of this was the fact that the theatrical topic had of late become, if not actually a sore point, at least a source of irritation between the young husband and wife.

It will be remembered how Mrs. Leadstone took the earliest occasion possible, after her daughter's return from the Continent, to accuse Frank to her of having concealed from her parents an act of importance connected with his past life, and how in the course of the same evening, without giving Frank the opportunity to answer distinctly her mother's

charge, Juliana had, by glancing at, instead of boldly facing the subject, led him to admit that there *were* subjects on which he would speak unreservedly with her father while he would avoid them altogether with her mother, and how, satisfied with his answer, she had dismissed the matter entirely from her thoughts.

On the occasion of a subsequent "scene," Mrs. Leadstone specified the important fact in question to be neither more or less than that previously to his marriage he had descended to the degrading occupation of an actor, a paid actor! He did not add that this tremendous fact had been communicated to her by Claude Cotherstone. Juliana had taken the important communication derisively, saying that he had never concealed the fact either from her father or herself, and that neither her father or herself had seen any dishonour in it, but, on the contrary, had thought it redounded to honour to have earned his livelihood in the manner most suitable to his tastes and abilities.

The reuon had followed much lively discussion between father and daughter—charges against the absent husband—being estranged the daughter from the mother—broken tender heart of the latter—and more to the same effect; all concluding with the usual nervous attack, and the speedy summoning of Luttrell with vinaigrette, sal volatile, and her restoratives.

Juliana, whose ardour, as we know, was not always checked by discretion, would frequently recount these scenes to her husband. Frank, on such occasions, usually answered with good humour; but one day, having been a little irritated by some observations Mrs. Leadstone previously made to him, he said rather warmly, "My dear love, pray don't repeat any of your mother's unpleasant remarks *about me to me*. You are doomed to listen to them indefinitely, as it is clear that your mother's dislike to you is invincible; but you ought not to let her remarks dwell in your mind beyond the moment in which they are uttered. Forget them for 'words—words,' as my friend Hamlet says—forgetting more. At all events don't let me hear them again—I am a dear little wifey."

Our dear little wifey tried the retentive system thus pre-

scribed, but with her expansive nature, the suppression of any emotional recollection was absolutely impossible, and Frank became condemned to a continuance of the infliction. Perhaps it was rendered more endurable to him by a "pleasing art," mostly adopted by his wife, of telling him her story with one of her pretty arms thrown gracefully round his neck, and of stopping *in limine* any interjectional remarks by a warm loving kiss. This chronicler believes there are many husbands who, under like conditions, would tolerate from their wives far harsher things than fell from Juliana's lips.

But however philosophically Frank at length brought himself to regard Mrs. Leadstone's verbal onslaughts, which in point of fact only reached him at second-hand, and clarified, so to speak, by the above-mentioned pleasant connubial process of filtration, Juliana, with her delicate organization and excitable temperament, was not proof against her mother's perpetual inuendoes aimed at the man she had married out of the purest love, and whom she regarded with the profoundest devotion. On one occasion, urged beyond all power of self-control, she, in Mrs. Leadstone's exaggerated language, "flew at her mother;" the exact truth being that she plainly begged her mother to remember that being now married, she owed a duty to her husband above every other duty, and that she could not continue to listen to more of these observations. She even went the length of adding that she began to see how great a mistake had been made in the arrangement of their all living together—and indeed had already told her father the same thing.

Mrs. Leadstone laughed a wild, hysterical, yet withal angry laugh at this, exclaiming, "Anyone might perceive that my daughter is not now speaking her own, but Mr. Francis Aylesmere's language."

"I assure you positively, mother, Frank has never said anything of the sort—whatever he may feel on the subject."

"Ha! ha! ha! So, then, he has given you to understand what he *feels*."

Mrs. Leadstone, however, thought it best to drop the discussion at this point, and put a sharp curb on her rising wrath, for she saw the danger that might lurk under any discussion

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important a matter, above all, if it were to lead to appeal to Mr. Leadstone, whose opinion on the question of double *ménage* was well known to her.

The injurious result arising out of the perpetual harping

Leadstone upon Frank's theatrical antecedents was that Mrs. Leadstone, who in the main respected her mother's judgment, at length came to ask herself whether so much ado could really be about nothing, and whether there might not, after all, be something reprehensible and degrading to a man in his having become an actor. She had lived long in the world wherein she moved not to be ignorant of the estimation in which actors and actresses are held by the public, and which pays them for the exercise of their abilities. As she knew Frank's sentiments on the subject too well not to have raised the question with him; but on one day, when Claude Cotherstone was riding by her side, she brought the conversation up to a point at which that astute man, perfectly aware of the current of her thoughts, immediately replied, without any question having been put, thus to indicate what he meant to pass for his opinion: "The Oh, yes! I've seen a good deal of it, and heard a good deal of it. Mrs. Leadstone has, I know, strong prejudices against it. I consider them prejudices simply because I'm not without my prejudices whatever on any earthly subject. But you know, they are highly respectable prejudices, because they are shared by society at large; and when society at large adopts prejudices, however absurd, they become the expression of public opinion. Now, public opinion, I verily believe, would pardon the man who cheats at cards than the man who becomes an actor in the upper ranks, descends to the grade of a professional actor. I need not tell you, my dear Mrs. Aylesford, that I could not allow anyone to make such remarks in relation to my friend Frank. But between ourselves, if he had asked my friend two or three years ago, and would have taken my friendly advice, he would never have taken acting as a profession. Talk of the sort of fellows one meets and mixes with there! Bah! Stuff and nonsense! I have heard of actors who were gentlemen—yet I have never seen the actors I've run against have been—pardon the expression—unmitigated cads; and, till I knew Frank, I

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doubted whether a gentleman could become an actor and remain a gentleman."

"There must be something lowering in the very profession itself," was Juliana's thought, as, instead of answering Claude's observations, or in any way continuing the conversation, she sharply pulled up her horse, and asked if not getting rather late—and did not Mr. Cotherston and they had better canter on homewards?

Claude laughed sardonically to himself, and said to himself, "I've given my dear friend Frank a quiet little stab."

This reference to the past has been necessary to show how it was that the theatrical topic having been the source of irritation between Juliana and Frank, they did not at once enter so heartily as the others into a proposition of which inevitably brought the subject before their minds. When, however, the excursion to Middleham was once settled, and the question dismissed, they fell in with the views of the majority in anticipating such little excursions the expedition might be expected to afford them. Frank, in particular, promised himself a satisfaction in renewing his acquaintance with his former friend and manager, Mr. Gainsborough.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE ancient church of St. Augustine, with its well-preserved Norman tower and lofty nave of almost colossal proportions, is one of the lions, not only of Middleham which town it stands, but of East Middleshire.

The Lentworth party having started immediately after an early luncheon, and reached the town by half-past two, it was proposed that they should occupy a portion of the afternoon till their six o'clock dinner at the George in visiting the ancient edifice, which Frank had never seen. Claude expressed much anxiety to see it—as a mere sight, of course, for he was a scoffer at religion, and all that appertained

religion. One source of astonishment to him, in connection with the subject, has been also a source of astonishment to better and wiser men, who wonder how the questions of ornamentation in religious buildings, and of the postures and personal decorations of ministers of religion have power to divide, as they do, multitudes professing and believing in the same fundamental principles.

St. Augustine's was at present decidedly "high" in its proclivities—because the present rector held, "high" views. His successor might just as easily hold "low" views, and hereafter sweep away, as Romish rubbish, the entire system which he—the Rev. Canon Burchell, a zealous pastor and a worthy gentleman—had laboured to establish; so entirely are these differences dependent upon individual taste and passing fashion, being absolutely independent of vital religion.

The interior of St. Augustine's, then, was equally famous for two splendid monuments of the Fourteenth Century, in the north transept, and for its recently erected and very gorgeous reredos, in the chancel. When our party reached the church, they found a side door open through which they entered. Several persons were already within, scattered about, examining the various objects of interest, listening to the different explanations, some of the Verger, some of no less a personage than Canon Burchell himself—attired, by the way, in his long cassock, which gave him a rather romanistic appearance—some of a younger clergyman, not dressed for clerical functions.

The Rector was a frequent guest at Lentworth, and Mrs. Leadstone, seeing him in the chancel, at once walked thither and addressed him. A young and pretty girl, to whom he was pointing out some of the fine Florentine and Roman work in the window, made way for the portly lady, who somewhat loftily extended her hand to him. Not holding Mrs. Leadstone in any particular personal esteem, he was nowise awed by her grandeur, and, the interchange of common-place salutations concluded, turning again to the younger person, he resumed his explanations, the great lady of Lentworth graciously condescending to follow as listener in her company, as also in that of four persons of the other sex, with cleanly

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shaven faces (she doubted whether they might not be R priests), who appeared to belong to the same party. were presently joined by Juliana, Mr. Leadstone, and Cotherstone. Thereupon more but heartier congratulations from the Canon, who, however, hastened to return reredos and its manifold beauties. After the reredos, were yet, in the chancel, besides the fine stained-glass windows, some magnificent specimens of carving to be seen and commented on. All this might have occupied a quarter of an hour, reckoning from the arrival of Mrs. Leadstone.

"Now," said the Canon, addressing the sight-seers as a whole, "we will proceed, if you please, to the fine de Bourchier monuments. Let me precede"—Then he turned to Juliana—"Is not your husband here, Mrs. Aylesmere?" She answered that he was, but that they had met Mr. Ives, as they entered, and she supposed the two together.

Juliana had hardly said this, when the Rev. Bernard appeared in view from behind a column, not with Frank but another gentleman, who, on seeing Claude Cotherstone, evinced some surprise, and bowed to him.

Claude stopped, offered his hand, and the three returned behind. After the interchange of a few words, they followed and joined the Rector's party.

"What can have become of Frank?" Juliana whispered to her mother, who walked between herself and the Canon.

"Frank?" Mrs. Leadstone said aloud—for she deemed it an occasion apt to let off a literary rocket before a distinguished dignitary—"Oh, he's sentimentalizing among the flowers, recalling Addison's immortal paper on Westminster Abbey, 'Zimmerman on Solitude,' and more in a similar vein."

"Solitude is not exactly the word for the situation, Leadstone," the Rector observed, "for I think I can see Mr. Aylesmere at the further end of this transept, talking to the lady."

"To be sure it is he," said Mrs. Leadstone. "I wonder who the lady is—one of the Savilles perhaps."

"Either of the Miss Savilles might be proud to be introduced for the lady in question," the Rector said, smiling.

"Ah, who is she?" asked Mrs. Leadstone.

"She is Miss Fenton, the celebrated actress," Mr. Burchell replied. "She brought me a letter from a friend in Edinburgh. I am going, with Mrs. Burchell and my girls, to see her perform 'Lady Teazle' to-night. Mr. St. Ives dines with us, and goes also. She's a young lady, I hear, of extraordinary talent, and most unexceptionable private character. I have no prejudices against theatres *as* theatres, and I have an immense admiration for Sheridan as the author of the two finest comedies in our language. Of course there are many performances I would not witness. I would freely tell my Bishop what I am now telling you. Perhaps you"—for the acute speaker detected certain uneasy looks passing between mother and daughter—"differ from me, so I hardly like to propose, as I had intended doing, to introduce Miss Fenton to you."

While making these remarks, the Rector and those with him had continued to approach, and were now close upon the two persons the sight of whom had given rise to the remarks. Scarcely had the Rector ceased, when Juliana, seizing her mother's arm, exclaimed, "Why, it's Marie Duhamel!"

Before Mrs. Leadstone could speak, Juliana, scarcely aware, in her bewildering surprise, of what she was doing, advanced, seized Marie's already extended hand, and drawing her towards herself, kissed her with affectionate ardour.

The Rector stood aghast, the four gentlemen with him looked enquiringly at one another, Mr. Leadstone followed up his daughter's embrace by warmly shaking both Marie's hands, Claude Cotherstone, after pausing for a few moments and surveying the little scene with a sinister smile, advanced, saying to Marie, "This is a singular meeting, Miss Fenton," and shook hands with her.

"Ah, you knew Miss Fenton was Marie Duhamel?" asked Mrs. Leadstone.

"Perfectly," answered Claude, "but I meant to give you all an agreeable surprise."

"Did Frank know it?" Mrs. Leadstone demanded, in an angry whisper.

"If he did, he has never told me. Odd, by-the-by, that he should—Ahem!—be the first to spy her out."

And Claude's meaning look gave additional expression to his artfully-worded reply.

Frank, in the mean time, had stepped aside to speak to the person already recognized by Claude, who was in fact Mr. Gainsborough himself, and who was accompanied by Smith-Elliston.

It is presumable that neither Juliana, Marie, nor Frank—plunged as was each into an ocean of past memories by this unlooked-for encounter—profited to the full extent possible by the learned Canon's archæological and historical exposition. As for Mrs. Leadstone, between the unpleasant associations inseparable in her mind from all stage matters, and the decided opinion on dramatic representations enunciated by a divine of undoubted orthodoxy and eminent piety, she hardly knew whether to feel anger or satisfaction at the said encounter. Tom Leadstone rather chuckled over what he guessed to be passing in his wife's mind, and said to himself, "The Canon—without knowing it—gave her one for herself and no mistake!"

Frank had of course told Marie the object which had brought the Lentworth party to Middleford. Juliana now assured her of the pleasure she looked forward to in seeing her act, congratulated her on her great success, and again remarked upon the singularity of this meeting.

"There is a fate in it," Marie said, as they walked together to the church door. "We arrived here from Nottingham last night. No rehearsal of the pieces to be played to-night was called, so I paid a visit to Mr. Burchell, with a letter of introduction I brought from Edinburgh. He was very kind, and told me he should make a point of coming to see me play to-night. I said I felt highly complimented; on which, in a pleasant, paternal, half-jesting way, he told me I might return the compliment by coming to hear him pray, and praying myself with him; and he named the hour of afternoon service, promising, after the service, to show us over the church. I was only too happy to be able to comply with his wishes, and I asked Miss Barnstaple there—she plays "Maria" to-night, and very well too, you'll say, Mrs. Aylesmere—to come with me. Then it got about among the gentlemen that we were coming, and here you see a good number

of them, Mr. Gainsborough at their head—I dare say to Mr. Cotherstone's surprise. But really we're not the heathens *some* people imagine us to be. It's quite possible that Mr. Cotherstone does not see the *very best* among our profession." Marie spoke these last words, according to her own native phrase, *à l'adresse de M. Claude*, pointedly and even with a certain bitterness; for she was cognisant not only of his private relations with certain fair ones in the lower strata of her profession, but of the heartlessness and unmanliness he was reported to bring into those relations.

"Miss Fenton," Thus Claude took up her observations, "I'll bend to your opinion, whatever it is. Can a man say more? As for your appearance here, I trust you, and the flock you have drawn after you, will all have your reward hereafter, in addition to that you've already gained in the advantage of Canon Burchell's guidance through the lions of his church."

Though Claude Cotherstone said this with a light and trifling air, it is right the reader should know that he noted Marie's stinging words as to be borne in mind against her at some future time.

Before the two parties separated, Frank presented Mr. Gainsborough to his wife, who told the manager she had the greatest wish to go behind the scenes of a theatre, and proposed to pay him a visit with Frank, in the, course of the evening.

"I shall be happy to do the honours of this small stage to the best of my power," Mr. Gainsborough replied, "but I think you'll hardly be rewarded for your trouble. To the spectators of a theatre all is illusion. They are under a spell which they should beware of breaking."

"It's my wife's own idea; Gainsborough," Frank said, "If she should be *désillusionnée* she must not blame you nor me."

"How well Marie is looking," was Juliana's observation, as she walked back to the George on Frank's arm, Claude being on her other side. "She is now really quite a beautiful woman."

"I suppose," was Frank's comment, "the consciousness

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of success brings with it a sense of power and pre-eminence. I agree with you, Juliana, that Miss Fenton is much somer than Marie Duhamel ever was."

"A great thing for stage effect, those dark eyes," said. "You must know that, Frank. But then don't think the habits of the stage give a certain boldness to the eyes?"

"Boldness is a word that never can be applied in this case, Claude. Stage practice necessarily gives self-possession and power to sustain the public gaze, and until the young lady in question, nothing will ever make her the epithet bold."

"If one thing is clearer than another, Mrs. Aylesmere, that the young lady in question will never want a change while your dear husband lives."

Frank laughed lightly as Claude said this, and as he himself quitted his wife's arm, for they were now near the door.

"Well, Mr. Cotherstone," Juliana replied, "as I can speak of Marie Duhamel, she is worthy of the companionship of Frank or any other honourable man."

"Long live she to be so and long live you to this Mrs. Aylesmere!" was Claude's paraphrastic conclusion delivered with an irrepressible snarl, and in a tone meant for Juliana's hearing, as Mr. and Mrs. Leadstone looked on from beneath the sign-board of the George.

"I wish I had taken Mr. Gainsborough's hint not to come behind the scenes," Juliana said to Frank, when they returned home after the theatrical performance.

"Really, dear?"

"Yes, indeed. I must confess myself *désillusionnée*. I don't sit again and again to hear that wonderful creature act as it was, in any ordinary drawing-room, without paint, or pearl-powder. I don't know much of acting should I? But Marie gives me the notion of an actress. In fact her acting is all nature."

"Not quite, darling. Her studies under one of the best teachers of the day have taught her what is classically called the *ars celare artem*."

"I understand, Frank—the art of concealing art. Then her appearance is so natural. She tells me she never 'makes up' in the least, except to this extent, that in order not to look ghastly through those flaring foot-lights, she is obliged to put on a *souffçon* of rouge. I saw her put it on, in her dressing room, and I'm sure it was not a quarter as much as fashionable mothers encourage their young daughters to put on at evening parties, and even in the morning. As for the other ladies—except that nice pretty little girl who played 'Maria'—they were positively hideous, with their red and white, the getting up of their eyes, and their coarse sham jewellery.

Then the young men painted with wrinkles to make them look old; and those scenes, so effective from the front of the theatre, such terrible daubs when you go near them. Those dirty carpenter men, knocking people out of their way, with tall 'wings' I believe Mr. Gainsborough called them. And that odd-looking boy, bringing in an armful of pots of beer, and the joking men and the giggling girls, and all the confusion and noise—when everything seems to the public eye so orderly and decorous. I can't help feeling glad you have given up all that, Frank dear."

"Remember," Frank replied, "that you were last night a curious looker-on at what was formerly to me but a complicated piece of machinery in which I was a necessary wheel. I had not time for such general observations as you made, and took everything about me as a matter of course. There are and must be crudities of this sort in every art. Who but the painter himself could tolerate for month after month the ceaseless mixings, spreadings, erasings, blotchings, stipplings, necessary to perfect the picture which, when complete, enchants thousands upon thousands of beholders? Again, take your own favourite art, music. Do you think the same people who delight to hear you sing your 'Last Rose of Summer,' and 'Di piacer' and so on, or play Chopin and Schumann, would like to be by when you are grinding away at solfeggi, shakes, and exercises?"

Juliana could not deny a certain parallel between the cases; still she stuck to it that she regretted having gone behind the scene of the Middleford theatre, and declared she would never repeat the act elsewhere.

The next morning Claude Cotherstone announced that he had received a letter from Lord Windlesham which necessitated his departure that afternoon by the three o'clock train. The meagre rendering he gave of his brother's letter shall not suffice to the reader. Here is a verbatim copy of that missive :

Upfield Manor,
—th November, 186—

Dear Claude,

I prithee no more gammon, but come to us on receipt of this.

What on earth you can be up to in Middleshire, Auntie Og, equally with your well beloved elder, is at a loss to conceive. Something, we both fear, not highly commendable.

These Leadstone folk ought to be nothing to you now, and I can hardly fancy your being very much to them—barring what that incarnation of vulgar worldliness, Mrs. L., may be hoping to get out of you in the way of introductions among your own proper people. But as you are not troubled with any spare good nature *pur et simple* I apprehend she's not likely to take much change out of you in that line. This assumes that you have no special end of your own to serve, for in *that* case there are few things, Claude, of which you are not capable. Now, judging from the sort of fetch-and-carry part you condescended to play about the time of the Belgrave Square marriage, I suspect you are ass enough—and worse to go on hanging about the wife who slipped through your fingers as girl and heiress. There is my opinion frankly. I hope I'm wrong, but I fear I'm right. If so, in Heaven's name abandon this folly! With such a woman as Mrs. Aylesmere by all account is—having such a husband as she has—any project of the sort is little short of madness. But even supposing it otherwise—for women we must all admit are inscrutable beings—pause, if not at the bidding of your own conscience, for the sake of your own family! We Cotherstones, like others in high places, have quite blots enough on our escutcheon, without there being additional scandal brought upon us by you!

Enough of that—And too much by a great deal, I hear you add—incorrigible cadet that you are!



ning to our venerable great aunt's proceedings in your
[, I have to say that her latest trouvaille, the
bys—Mr. and the two Misses, young girls fresh from
l—are now completely installed at Crowland, that the
has so arranged her tour of visits as to reach Crowland
middle of next week, and that she expects you to meet
ere. She says she has exalted you to a lofty pedestall
re especially on the score of morality. The Magsbys,
ling to her—How our never-say-die relative does ferret
out!—hold the lowest of church, and the highest of
, views. She says you will find Mr. Magsby the superior
Leadstone in the matter of grammar, though his inferior
iality and good heartedness. But the one great—indeed
ills it enormous—fact on which you are bidden to keep
eye steadily fixed is that this ex-cotton spinner makes no
alment of his ability and intention to settle five hundred
and pounds on each of his two daughters on their mar-
and to leave them by his last will and testament at
a further like sum. Think of that, now, Claude! A wife
at least a million sterling!

itworth with its broad acres sinks into insignifi-
by the side of Crowland with its hard cash. Yes,
er mine, the Magsby campaign is indeed a *jeu qui vaut
ndelle*. The sooner you enter on it the better you will
: not only Joan, Lady Oglethorpe, but

Your affectionate brother and well wisher,

WINDLESHAM.

nble. Claude Cotherstone.

ude's farewell to the seniors and juniors of Lentworth
carefully phrased to suit a particular purpose in each
alar case. It was:

ood-bye, dear Mrs. Leadstone. A thousand thanks for
great and unvarying kindness. You've really treated me
: of your family"—In a low voice—"Ah, how I more and
regret that I am not one!—" Then aloud—"If not
r, we shall meet next spring in London, when I hope
be able to render you some slight services."

ood-bye, Squire, good-bye! If I don't make a first-

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rate farmer and timber valuer it won't be your fault. Very many thanks for your splendid hospitality.'

"Frank, my dear fellow, I am sorry to be obliged to you. We've been very jolly together—and between me and this cigarette, I'm afraid you'll miss me. Some time, when I've seen a certain maternal party press viciously upon you, that I've managed to turn it off with my trivialities. Ah, a bad business this deal. How did you ever get let into it? I suppose that's all now. The mother-in-law has the son-in-law kept tight—through the affections of the daughter!"

"Mrs. Aylesmere, farewell, farewell—though a very long farewell. Still, life is uncertain. Never know whether we shall ever meet again. Don't forget me, or taking a liberty if my friendship for both yourselves leads me to say I trust he will—for your sake at least. I put a stronger restraint than, between ourselves, I do upon his temper, as regards your excellent but very excitable mother. I have given him a hint on that point. I know human nature—I see rocks a-head in the future with Mrs. Leadstone. You know he cannot resist his engagement that you shall live with her. I shall use a familiar phrase, knock under to her, however difficult the task. He is apt to vacillate in his conduct. I shall rely on your assistance. Good-bye! Good-bye!"

And with an emotion apparently too strong for him, Claude took the hand Juliana extended to him, and pressed on it a kiss at once respectful and ardent.

(To be continued.)





REUNITED.

QHE summer sun had left the land,
Unbrightened by a beam,
And winter, with an iron hand,
Had stayed the running stream;
But love was by to warm the heart
And set the passions free,
And who but death would dare to part
Such loving ones as we.
A brighter sun has shone since then,
And redder roses blown,
And, round the rustic haunts of men,
A greener woodland grown;
But change of season has not cheered
The darkness of each day,
For Death, the only foe I feared,
Has ta'en my love away,
I see you, darling, as of old,
And seem to hear you sigh;
But though the hand I held be cold,
The heart can never die.
'Tis sweet to think the wanton wave
That heard your wild adieu,
Will grant to-night a lover's grave
And take me back to you.

ALFRED HODGKIN.



ENGLAND AND RUSSIA.

LOUIS BLANC'S LETTERS.

SIXTEEN or seventeen years ago, when Lord Russell was at the head of Her Majesty's Government, the state of public feeling against Russia, on account of her merciless treatment of the Poles, ran "mountains high," and threatened to involve us in war with that Power.

In letter 127 Louis Blanc writes :—"In favour of Poland, and against the Court of St. Petersburg, and above all against that of Berlin, there is only one cry throughout England—that cry will re-echo throughout the world." It was the irrepressible cry of generous indignation against the atrocities of Russian rule in Poland, acts of unparalleled barbarity that should stamp her politicians with everlasting infamy. The iniquity of the first partition of Poland, in the eighteenth century, was brought vividly before the public eye, and Russia, Prussia, and Austria appeared in the character of a three-headed monster, fattening on the spoil.

The policy of the Palmerston-Russell Government was a do-nothing policy, that expended itself in words and nothing more. Nevertheless, in itself, it was the only policy possible, considering that Poland was almost entirely beyond the sphere of our influence. We might express our sympathy with the fallen, and our contempt for the destroyer ; and we might have done more, shown by our attitude that we had no desire to be on friendly terms with a power so truculent and so revoltingly cruel in its military rule. There could be no mistake in the unanimity of the public indignation. In letter 129 we read :—"England has sounded the trumpet, and in a tone that will thrill through St. Petersburg." The tyrannous conduct of the Russian military authorities had become

insupportable, and when the terrible consequences of it were laid bare to the public gaze the effect was electrical. All England trembled with fury, and yet felt her powerlessness to render any effectual aid.

The high-handed proceedings of Prince Gortschakoff, whose unctuous hypocrisy generally prevailed, were the subject of every-day comment, and evoked an amount of disgust almost unendurable. But we could not make ourselves the champions of Poland, nor did we seem disposed to countenance the possible intervention of France and Austria. Louis Blanc ascribes this to our insular jealousy of the French Emperor, which was then almost at its height.

We contented ourselves with remonstrances and demonstrations of discontent. The result of our expostulations against the Russian programme was, says Louis Blanc, "one of the most galling rebuffs" ever received by a nation.

England invoked, in an unlucky moment, on behalf of Poland, the treaties of 1815, "which guaranteed Poland to the spoiler." By making these treaties the basis of expostulation England laid herself open to a diplomatic defeat, which, when it came, was crushing, irresistible, and final.

Earl Russell, in his letter, had quoted the first article of the Vienna Treaty, which reads thus:—"The Grand Duchy of Warsaw is erected into the Kingdom of Poland, to be indissolubly bound by her constitution to the Russian Empire."

Prince Gortschakoff, in reply, with his usual cynical politeness, completed the quotation as follows:—"The Poles, subject respectively to Russia, Austria, and Prussia, shall obtain a representation and national institutions, regulated after that mode of political existence which each of the Governments they belong to may deem it *useful and convenient to grant them.*"

This settled the matter. We had blunderingly put ourselves in the wrong. We had become parties to the partition of Poland, and to the irrecoverable nature of her connection with the three Northern Powers, and with Russia in particular. We expended our indignation for nought, wasted our remonstrances in vain, and gave unto Russia an irresistible victory; and in stultification of our protestations and denuncia-

tions, Lord Russell, as the elect representative of England, found time and opportunity to bestow a "magnificent eulogy on the Czar," who, as the phrase goes, "could do no wrong," though a nation writhed at his feet in intolerable suffering.

The Government told him beforehand that, though we were sadly put out by the action of his myrmidons in Poland, we should not fight about it, our words would end as they began, in vapour, and "friendly relations" would still be encouraged and maintained.

This was all that Prince Gortschakoff wanted, and he had it to his heart's content. Such is a specimen of international diplomatic intercourse; hollow, insincere, and hypocritical to the last degree. The blunders of English policy with regard to Russia are laid bare by Louis Blanc with an unsparing hand and with remarkable precision. We have always played into the hands of Russia. We have refused to see her as she is, and have obstinately shut our eyes to her unscrupulous perfidy and ingrained untruthfulness. We opened the "door for the intervention of the Russians in Turkey by the protocol of the 4th April, 1826," and giving it the "authority of a treaty;" by "helping Russia to annihilate the Turkish fleet at Navarino;" by "allowing itself (the Government) to be deceived in the beginning of 1828; by the declaration that in invading the Turkish provinces the Russians had no designs of conquest;" by submitting to the territorial acquisitions resulting from the Treaty of Adrianople, contrary to the terms of the Protocol of 1826; by "allowing Russia to become mistress of the navigation of the Danube," against "article 109 of the Treaty of Venna;" and, lastly, by assenting to the violation of articles 11, 12, and 13 of the Treaty of Paris, 1856, "by monopolising the Black Sea by seizing and confiscating every vessel attempting to trade with Circassia."

To all these aggressive steps others might be added indefinitely; yet Russia has still her apologists walking—in spite of facts known and read by all men—servilely in the footsteps of their predecessors, than whom they have even gone further, and spoken of Russia's "holy mission," and her holding up the "torch of civilization" for the regeneration of oppressed peoples. Could the force of a wilful distortion of indelible facts further go? Might it not be said of such

“ friends of the people,” in a slightly altered phraseology :—
“ They have history and her records, if they will not hear them neither would they hear if one came from the dead endowed with omniscience.”

Since Louis Blanc wrote his letters on England, in 1863, Russia has exhibited the same undeviating characteristics. In the letters referred to the writer summarises the progress of Russia in her career of aggression and in her policy of acquisitiveness. None but those who are either indifferent or blind can fail to trace to what goal the steps of Russia are approaching.

The “ policy of England,” (chiefly the Liberal), says Louis Blanc, “ with regard to Russia, has always been uncertain, vacillating, contradictory, and consequently incapable of making head against that persistent spirit so deeply marked in all the acts of Russian diplomacy.”

The policy under criticism has been a policy of perpetual condonation of Russian aggression. In the falsified despatches of Sir Alexander Burnes (1837-1839) in reference to Dost Mahomed's intentions, prior to the war that resulted in the disaster of the Khyber Pass, the name of the Emperor of Russia “ had been erased as many as fifty-four times, and replaced by other words,” so that nothing damnatory against the Czar himself might be published to the world; and so the system of Czarolatry has been going on to the present day.

When we call to mind the diplomatic tergiversation of Russia during the late Turko-Russian war, to the signing of the Berlin Treaty, we see that in her policy she has changed not an iota—she is the same wily deceiver all along; even the Beaconsfield Government does not come out of the ordeal unscathed. Though contrasting favourably with preceding Liberal administrations, it failed to exhibit the full complement of firmness essential to an undoubted victory with the outcome “ peace with honour.” It consented to the retrocession of Bessarabia and the cession of Batoum, it might be from an anticipation of failure in the end; and told Russia (as Lord Russell did in 1863) that whatever she might do with regard to the provinces named, we should not make it a cause of war. We gave her a “ piece of our mind,” but

we supplemented the gift with a rider that we should relapse into a position of "masterly inactivity."

This was all that Russia required; the result was a foregone conclusion. A little more reserve and firmness on our part might have had a different ending, without the alternative of war.

Russia is a power that needs to be dealt with in an exceptional manner; she should be taken in her own craftiness, and beaten with her own weapons by turning them (in her own hands) against herself. Having no regard for truth or honour, so long as she can have her own way, and only anxious not to evoke overpowering odds against herself, her unscrupulosity in carrying out her evil ends may be taken for granted.

We have generally come off second-best in our diplomatic passages of arms. We assisted in playing her game at Navarino, through our overweening trustfulness in her promises, and have ever since bewailed that Pyrrhic victory as an "untoward event."

We have allowed ourselves to be hoodwinked, to believe that figs may after all be gathered from thistles, and grapes from thorns; yet we are as continually undeceived by the result of our search. Scratch a Russian, and the Tartar will infallibly appear beneath the superficial veneering.

It may be considered a settled question, with all but the wilfully oblivious and the Peace Society, that Russia will be Russian to the end of the chapter. Her voice (in diplomacy) will be smoother than oil, and more subtle than that of the "serpent;" but she will ever mean mischief, and, like Hazael of Syria, will do it at the fitting opportunity. She forced the Turkish war on the Turks, and the Afghan war on England, and she will unfold her latent evil intentions (as we already discern faint signs) still further as time rolls on. The Beaconsfield Government is the only English Government that has fairly antagonised the schemes of Russia, and refused to be charmed by her subtlety.

Under the present administration we have made the first "steady resistance" to her insidious policy, and even ventured to checkmate it by assuming the protectorate of Turkey. We brought Europe to a sense of its obligations, and by our perseverance in repudiating the Treaty of San

Stefano and elaborating the provisions of the Berlin Treaty, have won the approval of the civilised world, and re-established our prestige among the nations at a time when it had, under the Gladstonian régime, almost reached the "vanishing point." It is not necessary that we should assume a dictatorial attitude; but it is essential we should exhibit a becoming dignity, and not abandon our position in the political heavens, and cease to consider our light to the "earth beneath" a superfluous nebulosity.

If we efface ourselves we shall be effaced, and if God effaces us it will be because we have neither been true to ourselves nor to him.

It may be all very fine for the Opposition to persist in affirming that the Berlin Treaty is altogether in the interests of Russia, and will be found no barrier to her progress.

No treaty is expected to be more than a temporary expedient, which may be rolled away when circumstances render the aggressor against whom the treaty may be made strong enough to dispense with its observation. So it came to pass with the Treaty of Paris. Russia took advantage of the preoccupation of France with Prussia in her war with that Power, and wiped out the treaty, or as much of it as she felt herself able to do, and we made no demur to the act, but endorsed it. The Treaty of Paris, on the close of the Crimean War, staved off the Eastern question for 20 years, and for that time stopt the Russian advance.

The Treaty of Berlin will have its hour of repression; for no man with his mind and eye open will affirm that the treaty has in it the germ of finality.

When Russia is strong again, and sufficiently at liberty, her irrepressible longing for what is not hers will once more break forth, and give trouble to England and Europe. It needs no prophet to stand up and tell us this. Russia will continue to follow her "persistent" policy, till her pride and ambition, her glory and power, are shattered and brought to an end in the catastrophe that awaits her, which has so often been foreshadowed in these pages.

Meanwhile the treaty does not give undue advantages to Russia. There are tolerably definite barriers between her and the star of her hopes, Constantinople, and in Asia she is met

by the Anglo-Turkish Convention. The whole has obtained by the treaty is the retrocession of and the town of Batoum in the Black Sea. Her aspirations were cut down while they were yet gr Danube still flows between Russia and the coveted England and Russia can never be other than whether the "relations between the two count friendly character or not.

We should begin to look upon this as a nece moral nature. To be other than inimical to Rus to abandon both morality and religion, or for R transformed into a Power that maketh for righte be more anxious to deliver than to decei destroy. Her antecedents forbid us to expect so transformation.

J. C.



ON PLAYING SECOND-FIDDLE.

AMONG the inexpensive luxuries of life is wishing. Everyone knows the story of the man and his wife and the black-pudding, or that other one of the sailor whose desires had the simple limit of "as much 'baccy as he could smoke," and who, when pressed to sound the depths of his ambition still further, could only think of "a little more 'baccy." Such a man—bar accidents—would probably live to be old, and die respected. If one could have three wishes, I suppose "health, wealth, and happiness" would be the things to choose. If I were allowed a fourth, I think I should like to be master of the violin. To say nothing of delighting one's friends, or of never lacking amusement, what a moral safety-valve is here! To be able to let off one's joy without getting tipsy, or to scrape away one's gloominess, melting it into liquid music to the sympathetic atmosphere! I dream of it sometimes—dream I am playing beautiful tunes at will, that would make me a name if I could write them down when I wake. As a matter of fact, I never could play anything but the German concertina, and only therewith got sat upon for a nuisance. It is not, however, of material violins that I wish to speak, but rather of figurative instruments, and performers thereon. This "playing second fiddle," as it is called, how ignoble and humiliating is it not considered? To play no fiddle at all seems better. One escapes comparison. But to be somebody, and yet only second-best. To be nearly, and yet not quite first. There is the sting. And yet, are we wise to condemn others and underrate ourselves because we or they are only second-fiddlers? Let me try and pour some balm into the wounds of such desponding performers. Consider, first, that second-fiddlers are a necessity in the nature of things. Without them, melody can never rise into harmony. Imagine an army all officers, all ready to lead,

but none willing to be led. Truly there would soon be none left to do either. Imagine the world all mountain-peaks. We should have to live in snow, and give up bicycles. Imagine the flies all bluebottles, and what chance would a leg of mutton have? "We will be branches, nay trunks, or nothing," say the leaves, and straightway the forest is bare! There were no fiddlers, so far as I know, in St. Paul's day, yet his words will last for all time. "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing," &c. Having thus, by illustrations, sacred and profane, shewn the necessity of second-fiddling, let us go further and consider the usefulness of the performance, which, indeed, is only saying the same thing in other words; for must not what is necessary be also useful? Even necessary evils, as we call them, have their uses. By toothache, dentists live. The east wind has found one great apologist. Somebody else discovered that the hurdy-gurdy is not without a use, in that it shows there is a more horrible instrument than the bag-pipes.—Q. E. D. I maintain that the work of the world is mainly done by second-fiddlers. Ask the poor curate of the non-resident rector. The Esculapean first-fiddle takes his guinea and writes you a prescription; but can you make it up, nay, can you even read it? No, you must go to the chemist round the corner. Where would the magistrate be, without his clerk to prevent his putting his foot in it? Could we go behind the scenes and get at the real history of some great battles, might we not find that the laurels lavished upon a successful general really belong to some clever staff-officer, who sketched out the main outlines of the plan, in his tent, the night before? And so of the brilliant barrister, whose alternately silvery or thunderous tones insinuate, or hurl conviction on, the spell-bound jury. Who but the sharp solicitor prepared his facts for him—the raw material of his golden eloquence? "A fig for your commonplace chemists and curates," do you say? Nay, but think that over and above the abstract dignity attaching to all duty well done, is it nothing to follow a Master who said—"I am among you as he that serveth." Words of cheer and consolation, that reach down even to those who play no fiddle at all, but only dust the cases thoroughly and with sweet content, as who should say—"I cannot play, but I can listen

and be thankful." Consider also the absence of responsibility in second-fiddling. To revert to my typical curate. Not long since, a cheery parson asked me a riddle: "What is the difference between a vicar and a curate?" One answer was, "A curate is a man who is "not responsible for what his vicar says or does, while a vicar is a man who is responsible for what his curate says or does." This jumps with my argument better than the right answer, which is, "one's an incumbent, and the other's an income *straightened*." "Ah, that's just the point," says the first-fiddler, in *esse* or *posse*—"absence of responsibility means absence of cash." As a rule it does, although one sometimes sees a highly-paid official exceedingly clever in shunting responsibility. But this is exceptional. Now I am neither fool nor hypocrite enough to undervalue money, but I say, what indeed is obvious enough—that the more we have, the greater our responsibility. Don't we call a well-to-do man a *responsible* person? I don't mean from a moral point of view merely, but that the more a man gets the more is he worried how to avoid losing it; and the more is his personal liberty hemmed round by conventional entanglements and restraints. Think of Tittlebat Titmouse, or Thackeray's Cox the Barber. Second-fiddles live longest, depend upon it. "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." The clerk locks his desk and goes calmly home to his tea-and-toast, while his master, with aching head, worries over bad debts and falling markets. Think, lastly, of the meannesses, the lying trickeries that men have stooped to, the crimes they have committed, to win the first place among their fellows, from Pecksniff and his stolen plan up (or down) to Macbeth and his stolen crown. Look at the first Napoleon, after the tens of thousands of human lives sacrificed, breaking his heart on his lonely island. Look at Nero, an actual fiddler (by-the-by there must have been fiddles of some sort in St. Paul's time) lacking the courage at last to end his wretched life. For that matter, look at the entire list of those old Roman first-fiddlers, what awful croppers they came! "Poisoned himself—Killed by his mother—Died of over-eating—Murdered by his guards"—and so on. Scarcely one in six died in his bed, and one wonders how, with such dark precedents in view, the next man was bold enough to venture

to don the purple. To warn him was to pipe to deaf ears, even as this present humble piper pipeth but in vain. I know what you are all going to say. That the state, the army, the company, the family must have a first-fiddle, and why shouldn't it be you? That you are not going to let your talents rust, and see fools pass you in the race. That you don't mean to kill people, and that your mothers are not likely to murder you. That second-fiddlers don't escape responsibility, but are made scapegoats of.

"For faults, you know, are greater thought or less,
As is the person's self, that doth transgress."

That quotation cuts both ways, remember. But it's no use arguing. "Aut Cæsar aut nullus," if you will. Forward, then, the lot of you. Say good-bye to your friends, except the toadies and flatterers who may hang on to worship the rising sun, (if it ever *does* rise). Smoke your short clay pipes, drink your humble liquors in your shirt-sleeves, enjoy your simple pleasures that have satisfied you for so long, for the last time. Fight fairly and honourably, as long as you can. But if you, too, come croppers, if by fair or unfair toil you win your fiddle, and find after all that's its music jars a little, or a too tightly strained string hits your poor nose, bethink you of the warning you had in the pages of this valuable magazine.

F. G. WASHINGTON.



SCHOOL BOARD EXTRAVAGANCE.

BY A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF MANAGERS.

MUCH angry controversy has arisen, and mutual recriminations have been exchanged, on this subject, but after all it is but a preliminary canter, as the election in November will be sure to lend additional zest to the fray. Having had the benefit of personal experience in the conduct of one of the more prominent schools, it might not be out of place just now to point out the weak points in the School Board system and give proofs of the extravagance which is justly laid to its charge.

A new school is built and opened, the staff of teachers and children is transferred from some temporary premises, and a board of managers is nominated who are *supposed* to have control over the internal arrangements and to regulate the expenditure. I write advisedly *supposed*, for from the first the managers find they have but little chance of doing more than registering the decrees of the Board, and are compelled to engage and maintain a more expensive and numerous staff of teachers than is necessary, but they are reminded by the officials that they must comply with the rules laid down by the Board.

In addition to the staff of visitors who may be necessary to hunt up the children, there is a paid correspondent for whom an office is provided, and a man and wife to take charge of the school building itself. Without entering into the cost per head of the building and site, here are two extra officials provided, which, under the old system, would have been obviated by the schoolmaster and his wife living in the school house. The Board of Managers meet for the first time, and are informed that their first duty is to appoint a staff of masters

and mistresses who are at present holding their appointments provisionally awaiting confirmation. It is found that there are about one hundred and thirty boys in general attendance, and for that number there is a head master with an income of about £150 and two assistants at £85. The salary of the former was not considered at all out of the way ; but when it was discovered that one of the juniors was employed in teaching the first standard, it appeared to most of us that we were not only overmanned, but employing a young man with three science certificates to teach simple lessons not beyond the capacity of the most ordinary monitor or pupil teacher. Not desiring to cast him adrift it was suggested he might be drafted to another school, but the official was prepared to show that to comply with the rules laid down by the Board we were not overmanned nor the teacher over qualified. With about the same number in the girls school we found a head mistress at £160, and two assistants with about £60 ; but where the greatest extravagance was forced upon us was in the Infant school, where there was hitherto a young lady of three and twenty, who managed the children well, and possessed a knowledge of the Kinder Garten system, but who was not considered competent to teach children of from three to five years of age, because she had not yet attained to the rank of a first-class certificated teacher. We were compelled to advertise for one to take her place at a salary of £130 to teach about one hundred infants.

These systematic rules, and this lack of common sense and recognition of the wants of the school and locality, lead to a decided increase of expenditure without any proportionate advantage in results. To me it seemed ridiculous to find three quarters of an hour weekly devoted to Latin, or to be informed that hardly an Arab was to be found in the school. On my suggesting to the head master that this was the very class I longed to find embraced, he assured me that the Roman Catholics secured them, a fact of which I think that religious body may be proud, in having fulfilled a work in which, with all its costly appliances, the School Board in the district with which I am connected has failed. It was amusing to find from some champions of the School Board and extravagant routine fellow managers of the school, that they regarded the system

very first effort to teach the children of the poor, utterly ignorant of the fact that for the last thirty or forty years the education of the poor, in more than thirteen thousand parishes, has been instructed by the agency of the National Church. The inevitable accompaniments of Boards is expense, and doctrinaire educationalists, who know but little of the needs and capabilities of the poor, undertake the duty of fixing a standard, though, no doubt, it is desirable that children should attain if they have the ability, is altogether too advanced for the children in the labouring classes, who are compelled to leave school to earn their living at the age of twelve. The example of the London Board in establishing a higher school for the town which is not at all to be deprecated, but the attempt of the London Board to raise the qualification of every teacher, to a standard of education for the children, has resulted in a enormous drain upon the pocket of the ratepayer and no appreciable increase in educational results.

A CITIZEN.



I KEEP THE OLD WATCH GOING.

I.

I have got a brand-new golden watch,
With a beautiful pearl set in it:
From the spring's first blow till the fall of the snow
It keeps the time to a minute!
I have it set down in my will to my boy,
And I hope when I'm gone he'll wear it:
'Twas a present to me from over the sea,
And I love the hand that bare it:
But my father gave me one long ago,
When I was a lad yet growing;
How can I part with a thing near my heart?
So I keep the old watch going!

II.

You will find but right little gold in that,
And no pearl its face adorning;
But I thought it grand when I took it in hand
On my thirteenth birthday morning!
And my mother fastened a chain to its ring,
And my sister added a locket;
And I never felt since so much like a prince,
As when first it went into my pocket!
My parents are dead, and my sister sank
Where the Indian waves are flowing;
But the light of the past shall shine on to the last,
So I keep the old watch going!

III.

It is strange what oddities sometimes wake
Good thoughts that have long lain sleeping;
For the great blows fall, and scarce move us at all,
But the little things set us weeping!
I'm afraid that my life has not been what it should,
And habits a terrible fetter:
But my pulse beats quick when I list to that tick,
And I earnestly wish to be better!
O I think that I see new hopes for me,
And a brighter prospect glowing:
Though my heart be chill, 'twould be colder still
If my boyhood's watch stopped going!

CECIL CLYVE.

THE THEATRE.

THE Opera is dead! Long live Opera! The smaller operas are indeed flourishing, and for the time of year doing as well as most green bay trees.

Madame Favart is certainly the success of the season, and Mr. Henderson has thrown doublets again. The piece is as pretty as anything on the boards anywhere, and will be sure to draw all the provincials who come to London to enjoy themselves. Can anything be pleasanter to see than Miss Florence St. John? And when you have seen her with those large languishing eyes and that pretty mobile mouth, listen to her voice. When she speaks there is a soothing music in it, and when she sings——But this will not do, there are other ladies, who might be jealous——Miss Violet Cameron for instance; who, in spite of a certain stiffness in action, and a coldness of demeanour owing more to youth than inexperience, has made great progress since the opening night. Miss St. John *must* get on; for one sees she is not perfectly satisfied with herself, and indeed she has still much to perfect in her acting. Miss Cameron *may* get on, but she must satisfy herself that she is a long way off perfection, and then she will bring art to assist nature; and nature has been very kind to her in giving her extra good looks and a pleasant voice.

Mr. Marius (we shall not talk of him as *Monsieur*, as he is all but English now) is a host of himself. He knows what the English public likes, and he brings to his assistance enough French gesture and expression to make his performance the most applauded in the little "Strand." With a fund of humour and fun, he has the physical characteristics of a *jeune premier*, added to a sense of the ridiculous sufficient to make a first low comedian. He has taken a conspicuous place among leading London actors, and if he goes on improving he will hold it against any of the rising comedians of the day.

Don't let Mr. Ashley ever indulge in sentimental old gate-keepers again, as he did in *The Crimson Cross*. He never made his mark until he appeared in *The Pink Dominos*. Rakish old boys are his line. Ashley will remain a rakish old boy—the rakish old boy, in fact, of the English stage until the end of his days.

Mr. Mervyn lacks refinement, which is essential in such a part as the Young Noble in *Madame Favart*; but he has a certain familiarity with the stage which makes him acceptable, and at any rate he is not a stick, which most tenors are now-a-days. The scenery, especially the first scene, is good; indeed the first set is unusually so, for by the excellent arrangements the little stage appears nearly double its usual size. The dresses are as bright as they can be, and the music is Offenbach's. To say that it is entirely fresh is scarcely possible for Offenbach; but if it does suggest old friends, they are all the children of the Maëstro Jacques himself, and if he does foist on us a valse of eighteen or a romance of two and twenty for his youngest babes, they are so pretty that we gladly receive them as if they were total strangers, whose beauties shine upon us for the first time.

The *Cloches de Corneville* still ring as joyfully as ever, and before long Miss Kate Munroe, who has set so many hearts beating both in London and Paris, will re-appear as *Serpolotte*, in which part she had never been equalled. And seeing that Miss Munroe has considerably improved both in voice and appearance since her *début* in Paris, we may find a fresh lease given to the chimes of Normandy as they ring out at the Globe.

Pinafore here and Pinafore there! Pinafore *and aft*, in fact, in sailor parlance. Is it not told in the chronicles of the Queen's Bench how the second H. M. S. appeared suddenly at the Imperial Theatre. How the captain stormed the old ship, and how the Barker held the breach rather than strike his flag. In fact he got struck himself and pitched down the gangway. Lord Dunraven has a plucky agent, and he can sing,

My Barker's on the Strand,

and rest safely assured of the welfare of his property. But joking and rights of copyright apart, we have two companies every night assuring us they never use a big, big D., singing,

“Heigh the Jolly Captain and the Tar,” and still remaining an Englishman, in spite of all temptations, to belong to other nations; for, as they inform us with equal gravity, they have had opportunities of being Rooshian, Prooshian, and even Eyetalian. To say that the company at the Imperial equals the original one now recognising Mr. Doyley Carte as commodore would scarcely be true; but it is a very good company, with Mr. J. G. Taylor, an excellent comedian, as *Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B.*, at the head, and it is very well mounted. A great many in the neighbourhood will stop at the Imperial instead of going as far as the Strand. But though we personally have seen quite enough of the Pinafore, which would be worthy of its reputation were it reduced to one act, if we were bound to go again we should certainly stick to the old original Bark. We cannot be unfaithful to our Grossmith, our little Buttercup, our Captain Corcoran, and our Midshipmite—especially our Midshipmite.

Arthur Sullivan has been grievously ill, so much so that his journey to the Rhine was stopped short in Paris, where the popular composer had to undergo some torture at the hand of one of the cleverest French surgeons before he was well enough to proceed. We hope to see him in September, returning to wield the bâton so ably handled by Mr. Alfred Cellier in his absence. Arthur Sullivan is director of the Promenade Concerts at Covent Garden, and his name is a guarantee of the character and quality of the splendid orchestra now performing at the Italian Opera House. The crowds who nightly throng every corner testify to the excellence of the programme, and the pleasant appearance of the refreshment bars, with the cosy arbours, arranged with glittering lights and decorative draperies, make one wish it were possible in London to have similar places of recreation in the open air; where music and cooling drinks might accompany the evening cigar, and vary the monotony of British club and pothouse life.

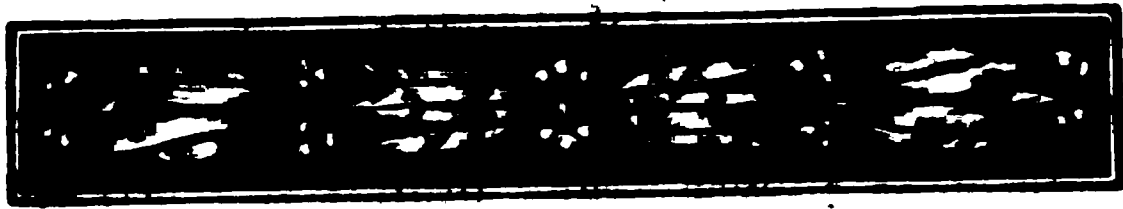
We are promised all sorts of stars here—Santley and Sims Reeves are certainties, and several novelties are in store.

Before long a rival concert is to open at Her Majesty's under Signor Arditi. “There's room enough for all,” and the best will win.

Frank Burnand has done wonders with a piece which was as improper as it was really droll and cleverly constructed. *Bebé* has become *Betsy*, and the English adaptation has produced an excellent farcical play, in which nothing is too good and every thing amuses. Herbert Standing has a part in which he brings all his imitative powers to make a character, and he goes up another place in his class. Mr. Hill is better than ever, and Mr. Lytton Southern affords an excellent example of "like father, like son." He will one day be a great actor. Miss Lottie Venne is an excellent actress, but she is spoiled with over praise, and Mr. Maltby is clever as the Fool. Altogether the piece has been well rehearsed and is admirably played. It will be some time before Mr. Wyndham can produce his bill.

THE





DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 9.

Deux petits mots d'un sens bien different,
Et pour lesquels on se bat bien souvent.

I

Sur chaque maison l'on me voit.

II.

Souvent je perche sur le toit.

III.

Un nom abrégé que, dit-on,
Aimait Louis Napoléon.

BROWNIE.

SOLUTION OF DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 8.

C	row	D
A	mb	O
T	waddlin	G

Sight II. "Arcades Ambo"

Correct Answers received from Lalla Rookh, Shark, Benedictine, Cetewayo, Black Beetle, G.P.O., Quite a Young Thing Too, What Never, Victor You Go, and Albatross.
10 correct and 37 incorrect. Total 47.



MESOSTICH No. 9.

Je dis,—n'en soyez pas surpris,---
Que sans moi Paris serait pris.

I.

Que de vaisseaux j'ai préservés !
Que de matelots j'ai sauvés !

FORTUNATUS.

✠

SOLUTION OF MESOSTICH No. 8.

Ru M or

A P e

Correct Answers received from : Quite a Young Thing
Too, Tottie, Black Beetle, Der Teufel, What Never ?
Alcestis. 6 correct and 43 incorrect. Total 49.

ACROSTIC AND MESOSTICH RULES.

Each number of the *St. James's Magazine* will contain an Acrostic and a Mesostich.

In each competition Three Annual Prizes, in money (1st prize twenty-five guineas, 2nd prize ten guineas, 3rd prize five guineas), will be awarded to the three most successful solvers.

Special competitions will be held for guessing off ties.

Prize-winners will be required to furnish their names and addresses for publication.

The same solver may win prizes in both competitions. Only *one* word can be accepted as the solution of each.

Answers addressed to "The Acrostic Editor," 5, Great Street, Ludgate Hill, E.C., must be posted in time to be received by the first post on the 10th of each month, or on the 11th, if the 10th falls on a Sunday.

In accordance with the wishes of numerous Subscribers, the Acrostic and Mesostiches for March, June, September, and December will be in French.



St. James's Magazine

OCTOBER, 1879.

HUBERT MAITLAND'S WRAITH

A NOVEL.

By FELIX HOLLAND.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MOSS POLITIC.

MR. ABRAHAM MOSS sat alone in his office, v
ledger open before him ; but he was not lool
the figures, nor at anything in particular.
eight o'clock, and Mr. Kannyman, his clerk, had tal
leave some hours ago, his employer the while making
great show of business. Experience, however, had taug
Kannyman that he need be under no apprehension th
zeal which prompted his principal to this exception
play of assiduity might lead to the taxing of his volur
accounts. Mr. Moss had his books taxed most critical
firm of accountants—Kannyman was such a dreamy ol
Yet neither he nor they had ever detected the slightes
in his figures. Mr. Moss often thus generously dismiss
employé while he remained to complete the arithr
labours alone. Next morning the old clerk usually
traces of wine about the leather-covered table, ar
extremely easy old-fashioned chairs and sofa which
mented the room in a state of confusion that indicated
a very disturbed state of mind and body on the part
industrious master, or the recent presence of merry
panions.

The truth is, Mr. Moss was, as his face proclaimed, a
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man who had great difficulty in keeping the dragon under. Much as he believed in the suppression of collective vice, his rich eastern blood was sometimes a source of trouble to him. On these occasions he was wont to immure himself here, hermit-like, cut off from the temptations of the delightfully wicked world. But whenever yet did the devil leave a saint alone? We all remember the terrible temptations to which St. Anthony was subjected in his cell. Thank heaven, they were vain; but then he was St. Anthony not St. Abraham Moss, the converted Jew. The world changes every day; but the devil is always the same. So, whenever Mr. Moss shut himself up thus, that evil adversary of the saints sent hither some syren of the ballet, or frail iniquity from the milliners' shops. Don't swear, my sceptical friend—I say the devil sent them; else how could they have known that Mr. Moss was here alone, at this particular hour? Anyhow, they often came. You could not expect one whose oriental fathers were accustomed to treat their deadliest enemies hospitably when accident brought them within his tent to dismiss his fair, but unwelcome visitors with the unceremonious brutality of a Catholic monk. No, St. Abraham Moss set before them cake and wine, after the manner of his forefathers, and dismissed them after they had rested and refreshed themselves with a bland smile and a kiss of forgiveness and peace.

There came a knock at the door, and, as he opened it, a very beautiful woman brushed haughtily past him, and took up her station against the wall at the furthest side of the room, without so much as answering his greeting.

"You are come at last, Pearl," said Mr. Moss; "I thought you might fear to meet me here alone."

"*I fear you!*" exclaimed the lady, with a withering scorn, that was not wholly lost on him. He smiled, however, and made no retort.

"Your letter informs me that you have a communication to make concerning Mr. Hubert. Be good enough to be brief."

"I will. I am aware that you have long believed that the good old gentleman, your grandfather, as you choose to phrase him, is dead. It is not so, he is alive in London, and I can bring you to him whenever you please."

"If that is all you have to tell me you might have spared yourself the trouble you have been at to bring me here. I am glad to learn my guardian lives; but, as you would have known, if you were not the most depraved of men, I have no longer any desire to meet him."

Mr. Moss burst into an amused laugh.

"My heart is not so black as you think, nor my brain so addled," he answered. "Have I not followed you and studied you and worshipped you ever since you were a child, and can you suppose I do not yet understand your beautiful and modest nature? No; you loved this old man, revered him, and would sooner meet the devil in your present—may I venture to say, questionable position?"

"Beware!" cried his fair visitor, with an impatient stamp of her little foot, as she advanced a step, as if about to spring on him. Mr. Moss thought he had gone a trifle too far, and was not quite comfortable over it. "The little vixen would as soon murder me as look at me," he thought. He changed his tone, and said, pleadingly—

"Now, pray don't get into a passion; you know I only desire to learn your wishes and to consult your pleasure. But I am a business man. You observe this apartment is simply an office, let us proceed in a business-like manner. You do not want to see this old man, because he loved you and you loved him. He believes you dead. Now suppose some person, we will not say an evil-disposed person, possess the means of convincing him that you live, and have lived, how you best know—would it not break the good old man's heart?"

"Fiend!" hissed Pearl.

"By no means; I am simply a man of business, driving a bargain with one whom I regard as a friend. How much would it be worth to you to let the old man die in the peaceful belief that you are resting in the unsullied grave that will never be yours or mine?"

This last pathetic touch, which Mr. Moss meant for a gentle hint of his own ready sympathy, had quite a contrary effect. Pearl's great eyes flashed on him with their old lightning that he had trembled at more than once, and she sprang forward within reach of his arm.

"I say," he gasped ; " no more of that, you know. None of your melodramatic tricks, or the negotiations must break off at once." There was something so cringing and curish in his manner that Pearl felt ashamed of having been angry with such a thing.

"What is your price, man ? I know you would sell your soul for money. I have rich friends yet ; name the price of your silence, and you shall have it."

" You mistake me, Pearl ; indeed you do. God be my witness I would give you everything I possess to win your favour."

He spoke so earnestly that for the first time Pearl awoke to the knowledge of the depth of his passion. This man had spent a fortune during years of persistent endeavour to gain her regard, and she had hated him so blindly that she had never perceived the sincerity of the passion that prompted his loathsome attentions. The terrible cloud that was gathering on her pale face melted away, and a wild light played in the depths of her beautiful eyes, as she flung herself gracefully into a chair, and regarded him so curiously and yieldingly that his whole frame trembled with intoxicating delight at the apparent success of his appeal,

" You have often told me you love me. What would you do to prove your love ? "

" Anything."

" You do not love me—you love Emily Aldair."

" Your *protégé* has told you that. It is a lie. I despise her."

" But you are going to marry her ? "

" Ask your own experience what marriage has to do with love."

" Pearl brooks no rival—you have heard that. When you are willing to break irreparably your engagement with Emily Aldair I will see you again."

" I will do it now, to-night. Pearl, darling, only stay."

Pearl was already at the door ; he touched her hand, she shuddering, drew it away, and was gone.

Mr. Moss watched her out of sight gloatingly. Then he drew a bottle from his iron safe and drank.

" By Heaven, I have touched her proud heart at last. And I will have her, though it cost me fifty Emily Aldairs. There

will be heiresses as long as the world lasts, but never such another Pearl as this."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

PHILIP IN THE COUNTRY.

It was in the middle of September. The day had been hot and cloudy, and in the evening a heavy thunderstorm burst over the village. So loud was the roll of the thunder, so vivid was the lightning, so incessant the downpour of the rain, that no less than seven horses, in shafts and saddle, stood reeking under the outhouses and skittle shed of Otley Greyhound.

By this you perceive that Otley on Surf was an agricultural village of that good old style now fast disappearing, by which the land was divided into many farms, and every farmer drove his own nag, and showed his familiar face at the parlour fire of the village inn on a market night. How cheerful it looked, that cosy, old-fashioned, low-roofed hostelry! How the fire-light gleamed through the windows, in the trembling wind-stirred pools of water in the dreary road! Right glad might the reverendest denouncer of such unhallowed resorts of the dissipated villager be of the cheer and shelter offered there that night.

Seated round the blazing fire the belated villagers betrayed no great concern. For the weather had been fine, and the harvest was reaped and garnered. Nevertheless, something had cast a gloom over the company, which even the steaming glasses and the first autumn fire failed to dispel.

John Dunder sat brooding over his taproom fire; and though several people were talking and drinking round him the landlord gazed vacantly at the glowing coals, oblivious of all but them. It was because he was accustomed to sit thus, and because his guests were accustomed to his habits, that no one disturbed him when the opening door announced a fresh customer.

He was a tall, graceful, young fellow, of about one-and-twenty, rather poorly but not inelegantly dressed, and when he spoke his musical voice started the most apathetic into attention, as only the voice of Philip Celini could.

"Is this Otley Greyhound?" he asked.

"Yes, it be the Greyhound," said half-a-dozen in chorus ; and the landlord, removing his pipe a moment, added, with a hazy suggestiveness,

"Good accommodation for travellers, well-aired beds, and fishing in the neighbourhood."

Philip refrained from asking explanation of that well-aired fishing, and, shaking the wet from his hat, and from his long curly hair, he coolly took the nearest seat to the fire, and requested that a cup of coffee and a bed might be prepared as expeditiously as possible.

As coffee was a somewhat unwonted beverage in the village of Otley, it was not speedily forthcoming, and Philip sat dreamily looking into the fire, quite oblivious of the curious eyes that were watching him, and the whispered speculations as to the nature of the business or pleasure which had brought the young stranger to the Greyhound.

But the greater number were too busy talking about some wonderful apparition which it seemed had recently disturbed the bucolic apathy of the village.

Philip at length, happening to overhear something of this, asked, wonderingly, if there really were any ghosts in the neighbourhood.

"Why, I can't swear there are, and I guess you can't swear there aint ; but there was an old fellow about here 'nation like one. So they say, I didn't see 'im. We are having all sorts of visitors just now, and shouldn't be surprised to meet the devil with the rest," replied the most talkative of the group.

This was considered a very telling hit at the stranger, and provoked a general laugh, at that young gentleman's expense.

"Look ye here, Tom Watts," interposed the landlord in a solemn voice. "If I were you, I wouldn't talk about ghosts, some of you have a long way to go home in the dark."

This was taken in so very bad part that most of the men drank up their liquor in silence, and called for more, that probably being their conception of the proper manner of evincing displeasure with the landlord.

This disaffection towards their host perhaps served to create a diversion in favour of the traveller, for one of the men,

whom Philip had already noted for his appearance of pompous pig-headedness, patronizingly remarked into his glass.

"You're a stranger in these parts, sir, and must be excused; but I assure you that if you had been here as long as I have you would have no doubt about Hubert Maitland's wraith."

"I beg your pardon. I did not express any doubt, my good friend," said Philip, with a smile.

"May be not; but *we* know you Lunnon gentry afore to-day," returned he of the pig-headed propensity. Like most English rustics, he perhaps considered he condoned his servility to local landlords, squires, and parsons, by his insolence to strangers.

Philip turned away with a slight gesture of contempt. He was so much an Italian that errors of ignorance and superstition seemed to him small matters, compared with the brutal incivility, which he had yet to learn was in this country almost invariably associated with them.

"And these are the men, he thought sadly, with whom my father lived and worked. Ah me!"

He drank up his coffee dejectedly, and, wishing host and guests good night, proceeded to follow Mrs. Dunder to his chamber.

Just then a fierce gust of rain rattled on the window, and at the moment the street door suddenly opened, letting in the wind and the storm. The candles went out simultaneously, even the light from the dying embers for a moment ceased to shine. And lo! on the threshold of the half-open door, a tall weird figure stood out darkly against the sky.

An inarticulate cry of surprise and horror broke the awful silence. When, the next instant, the fire blazing fitfully up illumined the ghastly faces of the men, the door was open still, letting in the storm, but the tall old man who had darkened it was no longer visible. And, when again the candles were lighted, and the men, crowding together, peered into the night, no living thing could be seen between them and the distant horizon.

"Who was that?" asked the landlord, awaking from his habitual apathy.

No one answered; every man stood staring at his fellow

with a terror too great for words. That old man's wrinkled face was not one to be forgotten in fifteen years.

CHAPTER XXIX.


PHILIP GOES FISHING.

PHILIP had perceived, with the rest, the strange apparition which for a moment darkened the door of the inn; but, being tired with travel, it had not power to long delay the slumber which soon brought rest and pleasant dreams. When next morning he awoke the sun was shining, and his breakfast had waited an hour. In answer to the landlady's inquisitive questions, he briefly answered he had come down for a few days' fishing, and presently he produced a telescopic fly-rod from his walking cane, and went out to the river side. All day long he lingered there, but his eyes went straying over the fields and the hill, to the dark ruin which stood frowning over the river; to a little churchyard, shadowed by dark trees, and an old ivy-covered tower half-hidden in the hollow of the hill.

It ought to have been a good day for anglers. All through it the autumn sun had shone with steady subdued light. A gentle breeze, just sufficient to rustle the alders and ripple the clear waters of the Surf, had risen with the sun, and continued through the day. It fell a little in the afternoon, but revived in the evening, bringing with it grey, feathery clouds, which now and then veiled the sun in their soft fringes, or obscured it with their dense folds. It ought to have been a prosperous day for an angler, but ought does not always take place in matters piscatory more than in other mundane affairs, and in the evening Philip was returning to his lodgings at the Greyhound with an empty basket at his back.

With lazy steps he pursued the winding path by the river-side, whipping the water with his fly; your true angler never gives up while there is daylight left to see his line. There was a slight splash in the stream at last.

"Ah!" said Philip, "that was a trout rose then, but he only put his tail to his nose, and waddled off. I'll try you once again with a brighter fly, my friend, and if that fails I'll say there are no fish in the river worth the catching."



That old sour grapes philosophy is not such a bad thing after all. I've a great mind to adopt it for good. Back to Italy again, the old library, the old language, the old contented faces, the sunny sky and sunny earth, the old seat in the orchestra to earn me bread and wine. It were better surely than living here in purse-proud England. Suppose I gain these lands—I have no doubt they are mine—could I be happy here amongst these stupid foggy-faced people? No, there is but one face in the world that could have made this land endurable, and that I shall never see again."

A sudden jerk of his line cut short his soliloquy.

"Whiss," went the well-adjusted winch, away went the fish up the stream.

"As you please, my fine fellow, you will hardly escape this time; however fast you run your fate is determined as certainly as my own."

There is no excitement in the world so engrossing as that of the patient angler, who, after waiting hours, or days, feels at length the wily denizen of the flood tugging at his slender line, only a thread, or a single hair to hold him. Slacken it an instant or draw it one ounce too tight, and the prize is lost.

Philip had no eyes for anything but his delicate task. He was fond of flowers, but he did not heed the beautiful garden that slanted down to the river side, from a picturesque old mansion, whose vine-clad walls rose on the higher ground, between the avenues of graceful poplar trees that sentinelled it on either side. We think he was fond of pretty faces—certainly of one pretty face, and it was watching him there in the dim twilight, from the garden over the river, and he did not see it. The friendly wind, fluttering and curving the graceful gossamer folds of her dress and toying, like a lover's fingers, in her long auburn tresses, that strayed in maiden liberty over her shoulders, invited his attention; but the angler never looked up from his line. Warily humouring his captive, he followed the bend of the river till he stood immediately opposite the lady. Then, when the fish began to grow tired, and turned on his side, he wound in his line, and with one dexterous sweep of the net he completed his victory, and

the monarch of the stream lay fitfully flapping his glittering sides in the long dank grass.

As Philip knelt over his prize, a stronger gust swept over the water, and the fluttering dress attracted his attention. Then his heart gave a great bound, that sent the blood blushing to his very temples, as he leapt up and bowed to Emily Aldair.

The fair spectator, now that she found herself observed, returned both his blush and his greeting, and gathered up her dress to retire. But fortune was for once propitious, and sent Zephyr in such blustering haste that Emily was compelled to let go her hold on her broad garden hat, in order to confine more decorously the rebellious raiment.

In an instant the light *chapeau de poil* was off, and whirling down the rapid stream. There was a loud splash, and looking back, Emily beheld the gallant angler battling stoutly with the stream for the possession of the fugitive hat. A feeling of horror seized her as she beheld him swept away by the swift current. She stood stunned and trembling, and could hardly utter the cry that shaped itself on her lips.

"Beware of the rocks, there are broken rocks in the water."

The noise of the torrent in his ears drowned her voice. Another vigorous stroke, and he had gained the hat, and waved it, dripping at arm's length, above the water. The next instant he had struck against a great boulder that protruded just above the stream, but invisible now in the twilight and the dark shadow of the trees. He sank, but rose again and struck out wildly for the bank. But he was stunned by the blow, and the rapid stream bore him helplessly away. Again he struck like a drifting vessel against the rock, and sank.

Emily ran along the bank, screaming for aid, but the dark head of the swimmer rose above the water no more.

CHAPTER XXX.

PEARL AT THE GREYHOUND.

IN the most comfortable apartment of the Greyhound, nestling in the recess of its bay window that overlooked the

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landscape, sat a lady with her chin resting on her hand, as she peered out into the dim twilight fast deepening into darkness.

Hour after hour she sat in the bay window of the hound, waiting Philip's return, musing now with her hands buried in her delicate hands, and now upraised in anxiety, as she gazed on the changing glories of the sky.

Slowly the dim landscape faded away, and the broad grey horizon the gold faded away, and the moon peeping through. Then the moon rose above the hills, and the landscape was once more visible, blurred and indistinct with its own shadows, and the river wound like a glittering serpent among the overhanging alders and osier beds. The wind and the clouds had disappeared, and the sky was as Pearl's broad white brow, as she lingered patiently for Philip's return.

The hours sped on. The steeple clock chimed, and the lights in the cottage windows went out one by one. The world slept, except in a distant window where a light shone all the evening, and was grown conspicuous in its solitude.

"Ah!" she sighed, "how far that little taper light! So shines a good deed in a naughty world."

The words brought tears to her eyes, for the memory of happier days, when it was her greatest pleasure to sit in the sunshine in a little garden, or beside a cottage, and read *Shakespeare* to dear old half blind Hubert, and nearly now, she had believed to be her grandfather, who loved with all the ardour of her yearning young heart. He had left her in search of the secret wealth which was waiting in the Indies for him to claim, and he had promised to return soon and make her a lady.

Her darling, old man—a lady—like Emily Aldair, and Abraham Moss to woo and perhaps wed her—for Oh that he had stayed in that humble, happy cottage, or returned ere yet the ruddy bloom of innocent girlhood vanished from her cheeks. Then, ah then! what had been, and now——

Unable to bear the prospect that memory conjured up, Pearl hid her face in her hands, and cried as only a lonely woman can.

Surely nature never meant a face so lovely for grief and tears! Alas! methinks the most beautiful faces in the world are those that smile above a broken heart. Some of the ancients buried their loved ones in gardens, and we make gardens of their graves, and nature laughs into buds and blossoms above the dead. The sea rolls its sparkling waves over the dead, and the fairy face that makes the world rich with its beauty or happy with its smiles has too often, like the earth and the ocean, all unseen to us, the sacred memory of dead hopes and loves sepulchred in the silent depths below.

Meanwhile Philip, slowly waking as from a troubled dream, found himself surrounded by strange faces in a strange room, wrapped up in a blanket, and reclining on a soft luxurious couch.

"I thought I was drowned—where am I?" he asked.

"No fault of yours you were not drowned," replied a great fat man, who was energetically rubbing his feet with flannel; then, turning to the several curious faces watching him, the fat man growled—

"Now, then, you jackanapes, be off about your business; he is all right now."

They were gone in a twinkling—he was evidently a man of some authority in the place.

"A parcel of fools," continued the fat man, rubbing violently with his flannels—"a parcel of nincompoops, to bring you here, just as if we had not bother enough without filling the house with wet clothes and half drowned men. Humph!"

Then, abandoning the feet, which were by this time in a pleasant glow, he addressed himself to Philip's hands, and soon restored their circulation. After that he poured a glass of wine down his patient's throat, and smoothed his blanket, and turned him gently on his side, grumbling all the while, to his heart's content.

"Thank you, sir, I am quite recovered now," said Philip.

"O, you are, are you?—quite time, too, your clothes must

be nearly dry by this time. If they haven't let the fire out, the blockheads."

"Is this the house with the poplars," asked Philip.

"Yes, and a precious good job for you Mr. Aldair is not at home to-night. A pretty piece of work; we should have had him swearing, Miss Emily fainting, and you dripping all over the house."

"Is she better—the young lady?"

"Never you mind the young lady."

Philip thought it best to be silent, and the fat man took the opportunity to pour more wine down his throat, and helped himself to a quantity, in a water glass.

"At least I may ask to whom I owe my life?"

"'Hally,' the miller's dog, dragged you out; he's always dragging somebody or other out. It's my belief a man couldn't drown himself within a mile of the mill for that dog. There's always boys tumbling in, just for aggravation and to get off going to school, and that dog is sure to drag them out on our side, just to give me the bother of rubbing them down. It's just my luck. I'll shoot that dog some of these days. Feel better? Have a glass of wine?"

Philip was protesting that he had had too much already, when there came a violent ring at the bell.

"There! there! that's master's bell. He'll go mad if I am not at his elbow. The servant will bring you your clothes; dress and slip out quietly, and take care not to play us this trick again, or, by Heaven, I'll pitch you in again, and that horrid dog along with you, with a grindstone round his neck. Help yourself to wine."

In half-an-hour a servant was conducting Philip on tiptoe out of the house by a side door.

Turn to the right when you get to the front of the house and take the path through the shrubbery—that will take you to the road."

Philip thanked him, and crept away.

CHAPTER XXXI.

WHAT THE MOON SAW.

WHEN Philip was groping his way through the shrubbery a dark figure glided out of the deep shadows to his side. It was very dark, but Philip recognized her immediately—so keen are lovers eyes.

She did not speak, but laid her soft warm hand on his, and sobbed.

“Emily—Miss Aldair !” he exclaimed.

“Yes, yes, don’t speak loud. I came to thank you for—for trying to save my hat. Oh ! I am so glad !”

“Not so glad as I am to hear you say so—to stand again a moment by your side and hear your voice.”

Emily did not answer and Philip continued—

“Miss Aldair, I hope you will acquit me of all dishonourable intentions in this intrusion. I assure you I had no hope of ever seeing you again. Yet, since we have met, permit me to tell you something that I most earnestly wished you to know. I am no longer the penniless lad you knew me. I shall soon be what you English call worth many thousands of pounds. I know that you will think neither better nor worse of me for that, only my love can no longer be a disgrace to you.”

“Oh ! Philip, you know I never cared for your poverty,” cried Emily reproachfully.

“I do know it.”

After a long silence, so silent that he thought he could hear the beating of the fluttering heart, as she clung to his arm, he said, earnestly.

“Emily, we shall never be happy till you break through this silly conventionality you call duty. True duty may consist in that of sacrificing your own pleasures and desires, your very God-given instincts, for the gratification of others ; but remember you owe no more to them than you do to me. A child should owe nothing to its parents but the love they have shown it. What love has your father ever given to you ? If he loved you, he would seek your happiness, and he only seeks

his own. Your Bible and mine, though I interpret some of its sacred teachings differently, the Bible teaches us to love others as we love ourselves. Weigh your own happiness against your father's, and if you have any doubt throw mine into the scale. Are not our two young lives, with all their years, to be made a curse or a blessing by your present irrevocable decision, more to be considered than the remnants of a sordid life, that has been spent in the gratification of his own desires at the expense of those who should have had its care and love?"

"Oh, what would you have me do?"

"Be a woman, fly with me!" said Philip earnestly.

Emily hastily drew her hand away.

"As you love me, Philip, do not tempt me to that," she cried, with a sudden terror. "I cannot reason, I can only act as I have been taught. My dearest mother gave her life up to the wishes of a parent whom God's word taught her to obey. She believed it her duty and I think it mine. Forgive me, Philip, the wrong I have done you. The pleasure of your companionship was so great that I did not know it was wrong then. But now I have had time to think and pray. Oh! it cannot be that our Father in Heaven has let me come to a wrong decision. I left it in His hands. Surely He hears us when we pray?"

"And you think it is His will that you should marry this Mr. Moss, Emily?"

"Yes, yes. I did not think so once, but I think so now. Do not ask me why. There are things I cannot, I cannot—I dare not speak of. Oh, Philip, if you only knew!"

Philip had read enough to know that it was vain to reason with such impressions as these. When a pure-hearted weak woman puts her trust in God, and believes her thoughts to be His voice, her weakness becomes her strength, and, right or wrong, she walks her unswerving course—then most unswerving when it leads through the martyr's fire. It was hopeless, yet he pleaded still, as a hero fights in scorn of fate when he knows that life and victory are lost. He took her hands in his, and spoke with all the passion and earnestness of his heart.

"Emily, this is the last opportunity you will have. In a few

days you will be pledged to a life of sorrow and regret. While there is yet time prevent it, fly with me to Italy where I have kind friends who will welcome you, and we shall be happy as Petrarch and Laura, or Dante and Beatrice might have been. Remain here, and we shall be miserable as they were."

He felt the hot tears falling on his hands. She was trembling, too, as he raised her drooping head. He bent over her and kissed her forehead. She was sobbing too much to speak ; he drew her arm within his own and slowly led her back to the house. When the confines of the shrubbery were reached he halted.

"You have not given me an answer, Emily. Shall we be happy ? "

"No, Philip, never—never."

"Good bye, dear. Yet—may I—once, and once only ? "

There was one long maddening kiss, one last long passionate embrace, then Emily tore herself from his arms, and blinded and reeling ran towards the house.

Philip listened to her hurrying footsteps till the door opened and closed in the darkness, then he hurried away.

Soon he reached a bend in the road where the river lay black and calm at his side. It was dark now, for clouds had partly overspread the moon and were threatening a storm. There was only sufficient light to show the outline of the great desolate ridge rising, steeply from the water's edge, and the white wilderness of gravestones surrounding the almost invisible church on the hill slope. Away, up the river, the only light in all the landscape shone in the bay-window of the Greyhound.

It was near midnight when he passed the churchyard gate, and picked his way through the graves to the old church porch. He sat down and listened to the dull, hollow sound that the wind made in the aisles and arches of the ruinous old building.

"Strange," he thought, "I should be horrified to sit alone in a churchyard at midnight at any other time, in any other place, but here, and now, I do not mind it. Perhaps because my mother's grave is near, and her spirit takes all terror from the place. Oh ! mother, mother ! would I, too, were dead ! "

In the excitement of his conflicting emotions he un-

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consciously uttered the cry aloud, and the tone of his voice came wailing back in ghostly mimic dead !

The lonely echoes frightened him from hesitating, turned and grouped his way around, deciphering as best he could by the moonlight written on the tombstones, and the texts and verses below.

At length he came to a lonely corner of the graveyard where the grass grew long and dank over the unvisited grave. There, just inside the confines of the sacred enclosure, hidden by the grass and weeds, lay a grey granite slab. Obscured was it that Philip stumbled on it in the darkness. He knelt trembling over it, and, reading the inscription memorated, he kissed the cold marble with longing lips while the unrestrained tears came thick and fast, and he thought of him to all but love and sorrow.

Ah ! if she who owned the poor clay tablet could speak to him from the lonely grave, beneath the weeds, as if from the living and the dead, could only speak to him of her own story of kindred sorrow and love, so that he would not seem so alone in death, he so alone in life.

Yet had not the living utterly forgotten her, he had found the relics of a wreath of flowers were lying at the foot of the stone. The blossoms were withered, but their fragrant perfume had reached the young pilgrim through the air. He groped for it, grasped it, and kissed it. Then he picked up the fallen petals from the stone he wrapped them carefully in a letter, and placed it reverently near the grave. An hour he lingered, and when he resumed his way his eyes were heavy, and his head was bowed; yet he felt lightened of a heavy load.

CHAPTER XXXII.

PEARL SAYS FAREWELL.

TIRED by travel, and still more by the incessant importunities of Mrs. Dunder, Pearl at last consented to go. She knew Philip's wayward nature, and endeavored to make the best of it.
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herself that his absence was not the result of accident, but of some sudden whim. Still, she felt a vague dread, and could not sleep till she heard his steps on the stairs. Mrs. Dunder, who had magnanimously volunteered to sit up for the truant, had long since lapsed into the peaceful slumber of the virtuous, and Pearl, once sure that Philip was safe, was soon also asleep and dreaming of a happiness that might never more be hers, unless there were some condition of life hereafter, as she sometimes fondly hoped, which her pleasant dreams foreshadowed. Philip, too, slept soundly, but his dream was but the shadow of the sad waking dream that had passed.

When philosophy balances up the ills and pleasures of life she will make but a bungling account if she omits our dreams for the reckoning. Who shall tell how much we suffer and enjoy in the lengthened hours of slumber?

A sick child lay by its mother's side, who, wearied with long watching, had fallen asleep.

"Mother, dear, I am well now," murmured the little sufferer, in a painless moment. One minute after the mother awoke, and told the child how she had dreamt that she had heard her voice saying she was well now, and calling her to walk in the meadows. Then she arose, and hand-in-hand they went for a long walk over the blessed fields, and gathered handfuls and handfuls of flowers, and hunted bright winged butterflies away—away over miles and miles of cowslip-sprinkled meadows. And at evening they returned and played with Mary and Emma and Alfred in the garden, singing and laughing till the twilight fell over their glee.

And all this passed in one minute of time, as the clock reckons. If the soul can live a day so long in sixty seconds of slumber, who shall say how much it may enjoy or suffer in a night? When I see a man with a wrinkled, haggard face, and a dull wretched eye, I think—there is a man whose dreams are bad. "*Eccovi l'uorn ch' è stato all' Inferno.*" And when I meet one who under all the lines graven by daily care and suffering carries a quiet peace and a ready smile, I envy him his nights. Call no man happy till he is dead—till the light of eternity reveals the lost record of his dreams.

The sun was far up over the hill when Philip awoke,

and Pearl, who had already breakfasted, was gone out for a walk, having first left a note with the landlady apprising Philip of her advent and whereabouts. His surprise was so unbounded that he could eat nothing, but hurried out in search of his most welcome and unexpected visitor.

Pearl had not walked far, her object being, as he surmised, not so much exercise, as a desire to escape the curiosity of Mrs. Dunder. She turned to meet him with a smile, so bright and loving, that his heart beat wild with delight. There was no mistaking Pearl's love now, as she stood there, just without the shadow of the hedgerow, with the mellow sunshine on her face, so beautiful in all the charms of gentle womanhood. Philip thought it was just as he would have liked his sister, his mother, to have looked. The guilty blush that often clouded her beauty—the fiery flash of suppressed passion that he had always seen latent in the depths of her dark eyes, seemed to have passed from her life. He had left her the most beautiful of Magdalenes; she stood before him now the most beautiful of saints.

“What has happened, Pearl?” he asked as soon as the first transport of wonder and delight was over.

“Nothing has happened, brother. I only come to bid you good-bye.”

“To say good-bye?” echoed Philip.

He looked earnestly into the deep tranquil eyes. No; there was nothing there to frighten him, yet he could not altogether forget that night on the bridge, where he first met her.

Pearl continued—“I am tired of London, brother, everything reminds me of what I would forget. I must go away—far away, where I shall never see or hear of the people who have known me any more. You are not angry with me, brother, for seeking you here?”

“Angry, Pearl, with you?”

“No; I am sure you are not. You will think of me sometimes, brother?”

“Always!”

She put her arm through his, nestling to his side, like a fond child, and so walked silently on till they came to the churchyard. Then Philip said—

“Pearl.”

"Yes, brother."

"My mother's grave is here. Would you like to see it?"

Pearl said, "Yes," and he led her through the graveyard to that lonely spot where reposed all that Philip held sacred in the land of his birth. A brief while they stood, hand-in-hand, silently gazing on that gray neglected stone. Then, when Philip looked up, he met Pearl's tender eyes brimming over with tears.

"Oh, brother," she sobbed "you are happier than I. I have not even a mother's grave to bind me to the world."

Philip pressed her hand; he could find no words to reply.

Her grief, like her love, was so violent that it beggared all language. He waited till the first paroxysm was past; then he stooped down, and plucking one of the fading flowers from the stone he placed it in the bosom of her simple black dress.

"Sister, our lives have not been happy; perhaps they never will be. I know little of your history, but I know that you have loved in vain, and so have I. Those passionate hopes are dead. Let our bitterness and regrets die with them. Let us bury them here in mother's grave, leave these scenes of sorrow and error, and go hand-in-hand in search of happier years."

She hesitated, but only for a moment; then she raised her head and looked up into Philip's enquiring face. He quailed before that strong fearless gaze, that seemed to look into his inmost soul, and read the sad thoughts that lurked half conscious beneath his cheerful words. There was a slight compression of those wonderful Beatrice-Cenci lips, and a flash in the black eyes that hinted at a terrible expression he had seen there once before and hoped never to see again. But it quickly vanished, and she was once more the beautiful, gentle girl, that had bent over his sick bed and nursed him back to life and hope when both seemed lost.

"The grave is for the dead, not the living, brother; we must wait till our passions die before we talk of burying them. It will be in another grave, which I pray may not be made for many years, that you will bury your love for Emily Aldair. No, brother, you have been very kind to me, and I shall die the happier for having known you. But our paths henceforth lie far asunder. I will carry this little flower with

Hubert Maillan

me in token of your brother's love
think of you, and think I see you
It will be so—shall be so—only I

She spoke with an earnestness
every tone. For the time Philip felt
well, and his sanguine young face

"You are my good angel, Pearl,
kind, wise words and your dear
future as happy as your past has

"Happy? Dear brother, I

And Philip looked and saw as

A long time they lingered under
old church, and when at last Philip
along the lanes towards the village
stopped still, shading their eyes
to look at them as they passed,
the happier for having seen so far

That afternoon Pearl bade him
sad farewell, and vanished
unobtrusively as she had come.

(To be continued)





GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO.

I.—HIS LIFE AND WHAT HE DID WITH IT.

VELLEIUS Paterculus is not an author of much reputation now-a-days: there is a lack of continuity about him which destroys whatever value he might have otherwise had as a historian; he is a most unblushing flatterer: and, finally, the text of him is hopelessly corrupt. For all that he was a clever fellow, and the author of some happy sayings which are still remembered. His remark, for example, on the death of Qu. Metellus, the prætor, in B.C. 149, is singularly graceful:—"Hoc est nimirum magis, feliciter de vitâ migrare, quam mori." And here is a maxim, which, rendered into French, would pass muster as one of Rochefoucauld's own:—"Ubi semel recto de erratum est, in præceptis pervenitur; nec quis-quam sibi putat turpe, quod alii fuit fructuosum." And here again is a very pretty remark—all rank flattery of course, for in reality everybody knows that she was a horrid old woman—about Tiberius' mother;—"Per omnia Deis quam hominibus similior femina; cujus potentiam nemo sensit nisi aut levatione periculi aut accessione dignitatis." But that remark of his which will best serve our purpose just now is one, of great shrewdness, to the effect that great intellects (like misfortunes) come in crops. He verifies this by a reference to names and dates, and the history of the eighteen hundred and odd years that have rolled away since he was gathered to his fathers, amply confirms the truth of the maxim. The great triumvirate of Greek tragic poets, the majestic dynasty of which Socrates was the keystone, and the brilliant array of wit and wisdom, which adorned the courts of the first Roman emperors, prove the rule in ancient times. Nor in search of mediæval and modern instances need we go far afield; for the reign of Elizabeth of England and the period of the First Republic can furnish a list of names which will compare favourably with the illustrious rolls of antiquity. The correctness of the observation of Paterculus has, however, been perhaps never more conclusively attested than by the simultaneous.

existence of a Dante, a Petrarch, and a Boccaccio. And the excellence of the instance lies in the fact, that each of the three achieved his reputation in a sphere which he made peculiarly his own. Literary fame was the goal to which they one and all attained, but each approached it by a different route. We are not therefore tempted to draw comparisons between their respective achievements, for we know that they cannot be compared. We cannot weigh a poet in the same balance with a painter, or measure a sculptor by the canon of a statesman. As well might we seek to judge Mendelssohn by the standard of Macaulay, or Galileo by that of Galen. The sun is the head of his department, and neither loses nor gains, *quâ* sun, when contrasted with moon or stars. In the three great writers of Italy we have, it is true, three suns, but each is the centre of a separate system. Moreover, as now there can be no comparison, so at the time itself was there no rivalry. They lived, on the contrary, in an atmosphere of mutual admiration, so genuine, that Boccaccio thought his time well spent in writing a commentary on the *Divina Commedia* and a life of Dante (whom he knew only by his works), while Petrarch would occasionally render into Latin one of the tales from the Decameron, and send the translation by way of affectionate compliment to the original author.

In the early years of the fourteenth century there lived at Certaldo in the Val d' Elsa, some twenty or more miles south-west of Florence, one Boccaccio di Chellino, a merchant. In the little country-town, however, there was not much going forward, and accordingly he very soon found his way to the capital, where his business thrived apace, in so much that now and again he was charged with a commission by the Republican Government itself. Now merchants in those days did not lounge in suburban villas while subordinates travelled from city to city seeking customers and making purchases in their behalf. The travelling they did themselves; and rough, and now and again dangerous, work it was, for Macadam was yet unborn and brigandage was considered rather a gentlemanly occupation than otherwise. These drawbacks notwithstanding, a considerable commerce existed at that time between Italy and France, and a tolerably continuous stream of travellers passed along the highways, if they could be said to deserve the title, which led

from the towns of Tuscany and Piedmont to Lyons, Paris, and other centres of commercial industry in France. So it was only in the ordinary pursuit of his calling that the Certaldo merchant found his way to the French capital, where probably, in the year 1313, his son Giovanni first saw the light. It would appear that the elder Boccaccio dispensed with the formality of a marriage ceremony, for in after years Giovanni sought and obtained from the Pope a grace of legitimization, discovered long afterwards among the archives of Avignon. Of his mother nothing is known save her nationality, and that is abundantly manifest in the pages of her son, whose vivacity and humour are to be credited rather to the Gallic than to the Tuscan blood which ran in his veins.

When not yet seven years old he was brought to Florence, having in the meanwhile probably accompanied his father on his rounds to various places in Italy and France. Even at this early age he had already given some earnest of his future greatness, for he composed verses, which won him the name of the "little poet." In the eyes of his father, however, whose estimate of this branch of literature possibly coincided with that formed in later years by Mr. Tony Weller, this precocious development met with but scant favour. He made him abandon the grammatical studies which he had begun under the eye of the celebrated Giovanni da Strada, and inhumanly directed his attention to the more practical questions of profit and loss. Had the worthy merchant lived some few centuries later, he would doubtless have been alive to the advantage of keeping a poet on the premises. But the day of advertisements, whether in poetry or prose, had not yet dawned, and the little lad who had hitherto "lisp'd in numbers," was ruthlessly set to the mastering of those uninteresting, if essential, rules which have drawn tears from so many a young eye. What progress he made in the art of multiplication, his biographers, legion though they be, have failed to discover. But the fact of his being ere long apprenticed to a commercial traveller would lead us to suppose, either that he acquired the proficiency which his father desired, or else that he did not shine in the science of numbers, and was accordingly transferred, as a last resource, from the mental to the material, from books to bales. But, alas! six whole

years spent in the attractive company of the commercial traveller failed to awaken in his breast any save a most lukewarm enthusiasm for a life of buying and selling again at a profit. There is no record of his wanderings during this period ; but at least he must have been gaining that knowledge of men and manners, and that insight into human character, which he afterwards turned to such excellent account in his Decameron. Yet what a dreary apprenticeship! How readily do we picture him turning in disgust from raw hides and rancid olive oil, and writhing under the torture of grey shirtings and mule twist, or whatever then corresponded to these luxuries of a later day! And how heartily and unreservedly must he have anathematized the goodnatured fussiness of the busy commercial traveller, when he descanted on the superiority of Genoese to Parisian velvet, or placed before his unwilling junior a long and crabbed column of *scudi* and *bajocchi* for immediate addition! Half-hearted work such as this was naturally not very gratifying to the parental mind ; and we learn without surprise that, after about six years of patient expectation, Boccaccio the elder recalled him to Florence.

The disappointed father, whether in ignorance, petulance, or indifference, seems now to have selected for his son the profession which would obviously least fall in with that young gentleman's views ; he bade him apply himself to the study of Canon Law. The ungrateful child once more declined to be happy. Commerce was bad enough, but the Canons were absolutely intolerable. "Six more years," he writes, "I wasted upon this unprofitable study." To be sure, he scarcely appears to have given it a fair chance. Naples was not the place in which a young man, who had hitherto led an unsettled life, and who was not renowned for his power of concentrating his attention, could reasonably have expected to appreciate the beauties of the law. Yet he was no idler ; it was the work that he loathed, not the working ; and coming one day in this mind to the reputed tomb of Virgil on the road between Naples and Pozzuoli, he felt that his detestation of the Canons had now reached its climax—wherein he was doubtless right ; for in all probability they had never before been hated with so cordial and genuine an abhorrence. The long pent-up enthusiasm of the poet, or the wilfulness of the discontented



son (for they seem to have existed in equal proportions) burst forth with uncontrollable violence. Inspired by what was in his own eyes the sanctity of the spot he vowed to brave at all hazards the paternal wrath, and, abandoning a career for which he had no love and less aptitude, to enlist heart and soul in the far more attractive services of poetry and letters. How the news of this chivalrous resolution was received at Florence, it is left for us to conjecture: there is at any rate no reason to suppose that henceforward any attempt was made to thwart the wayward youth in his choice of a calling—he felt that he *had* been called, and his father left him to himself.

Joyously, as one delivered from a hated thralldom, he writes:—"My own master, instigated of none, instructed of none, I allowed my mind to run wild in the garden of poetry, and pluck what flowers it chose. To this pursuit I devoted myself with eagerness and delight, striving with my whole heart to grasp the meaning of those noble thoughts which the poets have clothed in verse." Virgil, Horace, and Dante were his chief masters, and the last of the three he calls his "guide and torch," even as to the Divine Poet himself the writer of the *Æneid* had been "Duca." It is thought by some that he had already as a child made Dante's acquaintance at Ravenna; but it is only matter of surmise, resting perhaps on the fact that young Boccaccio always showed himself most anxious to know and be known of men. This was a disposition which at Naples he was enabled to gratify to the full, for at King Robert's court he encountered all, or almost all, who were at that time most famous in the Italian schools of science and literature. It was here indeed that he first met Petrarch, with whom he competed, unsuccessfully, for the laureate crown, and who was destined in after years to become his closest and best loved friend.

Leading thus the life of his choice, surrounded by all that is beautiful in nature, and revelling in the most polished and intellectual society of the age, Giovanni Boccaccio reached the twenty-eighth year of his age, and with it the turning point of his career. The crisis (need it be added?) was the work of a woman—*dux femina facti*. What Beatrice had been to Dante, what Laura was still to Petrarch, that Maria or, as he suggestively called her, Fiammetta, was to Boccaccio. Of the antecedents of this lady little is known, and of

that little not much to her credit ; suffice it to called King Robert father, and lived in blissful of her other parent, and that she had a husband—

On Easter eve, 1341, in the church of San Giovanni met a lady of grace so enchanting and rare, that the aimless passion which had held unlimited sway within him yielded without a the feeling of what he no doubt confidently imagined true love. He was not proof, as he himself names, against the fascinating twinkle of the “eyes,” and the rosy lips, the lily teeth, the snowy nose, the dimpled chin, which he describes so eloquently have sealed his fate.

Thus pleasantly were the days passing at Naples, when his father recalled him to Florence. He spent some months, if not years, in dutiful attendance, when one fine morning an addition to the family in the shape of a stepmother appeared on the scene, that his filial attentions were no longer indispensable. He returned with all speed to Naples. But not to the Naples he had so lately left. King Robert dead, the young Giovanna feebly handling the reins of government on every side—such was the spectacle which met his wondering eyes in the year 1345. He looked for the careless crowd of merry-makers, for the festivities of a court, for the quips of the witty, for the learning of the wise: their place knew them no more, and discord and lawlessness reigned in their stead. There was yet one consolation left to him—his father was at Baiæ. Thither he too bent his steps. He seems to have succeeded in raising his spirit above the normal, if not to a higher than normal, level. It is to this period of his life that we owe the masterpiece on which his fame in modern times rests—the Decameron. In 1348 occurred the plague of Florence; and Boccaccio, who, as he tells himself, had been an eye-witness of it, wrote a short history of its kind is excellent. He further collected a number of stories, supposed to have been related on successive days (whence the name Decameron) by a group of ladies and gallants, who had fled into the country in hope of escaping the pestilence.

The news of his father's death in 1350 took him once more to Florence, and it was then that his friendship with Petrarch became firmly established. Widely different as were the characters of the two men, they discovered a bond of union in the common profession of genius. Nor was the friendship based solely upon the mutual admiration of two great authors : the writer of the *Decameron* could appreciate Petrarch as a great-souled man as well as an unrivalled poet, while Petrarch could love the warm-hearted nature, as he pitied the moral weakness of Boccaccio, and yet admire his intellectual strength.

Henceforward we hear no more of Fiammetta. Giovanni himself we find employed in various missions confided to his care by the Florentine Republic, his knowledge of the world and his command of language adapting him admirably for such work. His most celebrated service of this kind, and that in which he must himself have taken a peculiar pleasure, was performed at Padua, where he read the official decree which summoned Petrarch back to Florence, and restored him to his former wealth and dignities. To this period also belongs the life of Dante, in which he inveighs in terms of the bitterest eloquence against the ungrateful treatment accorded to the man who had done so much to immortalize the Tuscan capital. Nor does he appear to have relaxed in any degree his study of Greek and Latin authors. He copied many MSS. with his own hand, and translated Plato's *Dialogues*.

Hitherto we have been tracing the career of a clever and brilliant courtier, who divided his time between literature and licentiousness ; but the time had now arrived when the unbridled tongue was to be curbed, the life of pleasure to be abandoned, and Sardanapalus to assume the guise of the penitent.

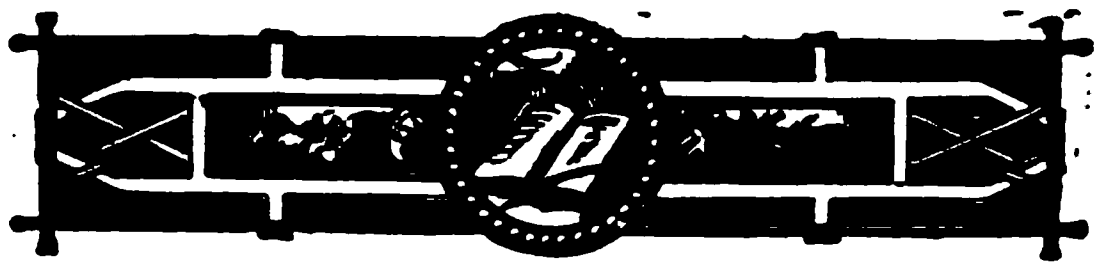
A certain Pietro Petroni of Siena, on his deathbed, charged his confessor, one Giorachino Ciani, to go to Florence and exhort the dissolute scholar to amend his ways. Ciani did not shrink from the task imposed upon him. Bitterly and fearlessly did the worthy friar denounce the libertine, and concluded with a prediction of such dire import that the heart of the man who had hitherto careered in joyous recklessness now died within him. His first impulse was to fly the world altogether, to sell his books, and to devote

himself thenceforward to none but sacred matters. But first he would consult his friend ; and Petrarch, while applauding his resolution to live a more decent life, adjured him not to abandon literature. This modification of his original purpose Boccaccio was fain to accept. He gave up writing frivolous stories, and devoted himself to the study of Greek—indeed, to him belongs the credit of having been the first to revive the study of that language in Italy.

The remaining incidents of this eventful life need not detain us long. Deceived by the specious promises of the Grand Seneschal Acciainoli, who had established himself at Naples, he returned in 1362 to that city, but was so shabbily treated that he speedily took his departure for Venice, where he stayed some months with his beloved Petrarch, and whence he wrote an eloquent letter complaining of the treatment he had received at Naples. In 1363 we find him once more in Florence. In 1365 he went as Envoy from the Republic to Pope Urban V. at Avignon. Disgusted with the ever increasing discord in the Tuscan capital, he finally, after an interval of wandering and unrest, betook himself in 1373 to Certaldo, whence his family had originally sprung. Barely on the threshold of old age, he doubtless looked forward to several years of scholarly recreation and repose from the bickerings of the outside world. But how rudely was hope dashed to the ground ! Almost immediately he was stricken with a loathsome disease. Refusing all medical aid he lay in his cottage a gruesome object, awaiting the death which he knew was approaching with rapid strides. Nor was it only distress of body that plagued him. It is recorded that he was constantly haunted by a terrible vision, in which he saw himself standing before the Supreme Judge and receiving a sentence in condemnation of his life on earth. This inspired him with so great a fear of death, that at length he consented to see a physician, who succeeded in restoring him in some measure to health. With this renewed lease of life came back the indomitable spirit of work which had ever been one of his most praiseworthy characteristics. Infirm as he still was, he courageously began a commentary on the *Divina Commedia*, which, however, his strength did not permit him to carry beyond Canto XVI. of the *Inferno*. The news of Petrarch's death, which now reached him, seemed

utterly to quench what little vigour remained. After lingering awhile in misery and helplessness, on December 21st, 1375, he was finally released from his sufferings. His will is still preserved at Siena, and his MSS. passed into the hands of his confessor, at whose death they were to be placed in the monastery of S. Spirito at Florence for public use. He was buried at Certaldo, and on his tomb were inscribed four Latin lines of his own composition, in which he disclaimed all titles save that of poet.

It can scarcely be said that his wish to be known to posterity as a poet has been realized, for voluminous as his rhymes are, it is not on them that his claim to literary eminence is mainly based. Imitations, and not always very happy imitations, of Dante and Petrarch, are frequent in his poems, and more than once he has been detected in an actual plagiarism. But if in verse he is mediocre, in prose he heads the list of Italian authors. His style, to be sure, has never won much applause; he has been charged with trying to prolong the Italian period to the length of the Latin, of writing sentences which "cover a league of country;" but all are agreed that, whatever may be the imperfections of his style, his diction is almost faultless. He has been accused, again, of coarseness and profanity. The fact that he is plain spoken to a degree no one will venture to dispute; but it is a fair question whether the suggested immoralities of modern novels will not do more harm than the blunt indecencies of the Decameron ever did. Be that as it may, Boccaccio can be read only in a very expurgated edition; and no such edition existing in this country, few English people knew anything about him. In following numbers it is proposed to present some of his stories, beginning with his celebrated account of the plague at Florence in a readable form. He is beyond all doubt an admirable writer; his vivacity never flags, his humour is inexhaustible; he makes us laugh with him on one page and weep with him on the next: he can be arch and pathetic, grave and gay almost in a breath. We cannot indeed pretend that, even as compared with his contemporaries, he was a man of great moral excellence; but when we consider the circumstances of his early youth, the depravity of the age in which he lived, the society in which he moved, and



OUR MODERN POETS.

NO. XVII.—CHARLES KINGSLEY.

COLERIDGE in his *Biographia Literaria* advises young literary men to go into the Church, on the ground that, while thus likely to have a yearly income for clerical duties performed they may, at the same time, have leisure for the pursuit of their favourite studies. A natural criticism on such an advice is, that it implies, at first sight, no very high compliment to the Church; but the counter consideration, that men with real literary taste are likely to elevate and dignify the clerical profession, is of itself so momentous as to have (if necessary) a palliative quality. Coleridge himself, it is to be feared, had he been fairly captured and decorated with "orders," would have made but an indifferent clergyman. It is probable that he would have been a practical illustration of the extremes of his own theory—he would have looked upon the Church as the handmaiden of Literature. There would have been some telling scenes between him and his parishioners: the one engaged with his own thoughts, and the many with keen eye in the direction of their privileges. It is just possible, indeed, that a minor degree of the same difficulty is not unknown in real life, and that its presence is largely due to such an underlying motive as that which suggested Coleridge's advice to young poets and philosophers. There undoubtedly are men in the Church whose strength lies in Literature rather than theology; and it may be left, meanwhile, an open question whether it is preferable to have such ornamental members or to want them in deference to the undoubted majority whose strength lies in nothing particular.

For men of real intellectual acuteness and energy of soul, the ministry ought to be one of the very foremost of professions. It is full of material and gracious impulse, and it

admits—what, no doubt, was chiefly in Coleridge's mind as he wrote his advice—of an unusual proportion of learned leisure. Indeed, it is hard for the uninitiated to know what those clergy, of whose contributions to Literature nothing has been heard, can possibly do in all the hours that must be non-professional. But, such a subject of wonder, however natural in an idle moment or as it falls in with a passing mood, is too trivial to deserve more than a merely cursory attention, and indeed it would be unbecoming, and possibly impertinent, to dwell upon it at greater length. No man is bound to contribute to his country's literature, even were his position such as to imply the indispensable resources; and it is not open, therefore, to attach blame where responsibility cannot be proved. On the other hand, most of those clergymen that do write anything of permanent value are so placed that authorship is not necessarily one stray source of a scrambling livelihood. Literary work may thus be, in some cases, rather a relaxation than a task, while pretty often it springs from a healthy and vigorous interest in what may or may not have reference to routine duty. If a clergyman is something more than a merely mechanical functionary he is pretty likely to make his influence felt. He may burst forth into glowing imaginative prose, like Jeremy Taylor; he may write against time with the pious fervour of Baxter, or shoot out his wisdom at random with the quaint stateliness of Fuller; he may conceive it to be his duty to controvert fatal error, and so produce his "Analogy" as a classic for all generations; or he may produce "Tracts for his Times," on the ground that there is a hydra of Misconception to be fought, and then become a leader of psychological thought and a literary ornament.

Charles Kingsley was the kind of man whose energies were so great that mere pulpiteering and pastoral effort were insufficient to exhaust them. He had an expansive sense of responsibility and perhaps an exaggerated notion of the sphere and extent of personal effort and influence. There was nothing of the merely traditional in his doings. He was in a sense a practical illustration of Coleridge's belief that a clergyman was expected to do more than wear a surplice and gossip with his neighbours. He may have been wrong in some of his fancies about the practical duties of Christian men and

women, and the amelioration of human destiny ; but there cannot be a question as to his intense earnestness and his enormous energy. " Muscular Christianity " may be simply the exaggeration of an unimportant—or at any rate subordinate—feature of right living ; and " Chartism " may have been only a passing wave of social unrest ; but it was only a man with unusual insight, zeal, and intellectual activity that could practise the one and idealize the other. Kingsley had a clear perception of the grand fact that right living is a complex product, and he was an ardent apostle of that self-perfecting which comes of subjective effort. When he found the people clamouring for legislation as a panacea for miseries and misfortunes, he exerted himself to induce greater respect for personal dignity. He readily grasped the fact that individuals could lay claim to certain rights and liberties ; but he was confident that the prime consideration for every man was that he should be worthy of himself as an individual and a social agent. No mere surging of a mob was likely to accomplish anything definite or real ; on the other hand, such aimless movement and such ill-regulated effort could lead but to confusion and inglorious collapse. Let every man, in the first place, see that he understands his individual position ; let him have a thorough self-knowledge before committing himself to serious action ; and, above all, let him beware of merely following a multitude. The blind may certainly lead the blind , but their common destination, even to the observer of average intelligence, is the hopeless ditch. On the contrary, as Minerva says to Ulysses after his unapproachable throwing of the stone, even a blind man has only to grope a little to discover the supreme individual. Personal worth is sure of recognition, and strong originality, if well directed, cannot fail to make its way. The following " Hunting Song " is not poetry of a high order, but it is clearly conceived, vigorous and attractive in execution, and a glow with manly purpose :—

" Forward ! Hark forward's the cry !
 One more fence, and we're out on the open,
 So to us at once, if you want to live near us !
 Hark to them, ride to them, beauties ! as on they go
 Leaping and sweeping away in the vale below !
 Cowards and bunglers, whose heart or whose eye is slow,
 Find themselves staring alone.
 So the great cause flashes by ;

Nearer and clearer its purposes open,
While louder and prouder the world-echoes cheer us;
Gentlemen sportsmen, you ought to live up to us,
Lead us, and lift us, and hallo our game to us—
We cannot call the hounds off, and no shame to us—
Don't be left staring alone!"

The appeal to "gentlemen sportsmen" in the second of these stanzas, was probably conceived by Kingsley less from contempt for what is sometimes considered elegant idling, and more from his firm conviction that a man's energies should not go forth exclusively towards fox-hunting and pigeon shooting. Indeed, he held for a considerable time an attitude which is never permanently tenable, and which is apt to end in defeat and despair. He thought to reconcile the different classes of society to one another by insisting that the wealthy and the powerful should have more consideration for their less fortunate fellows than seemed to an impartial onlooker to characterize them. He set out for the lofty notion of duty, already indicated as his ideal of a basis for conduct, and he arrived at the conclusion that the aristocracy were too exclusive. The "wail of Saxon men," that sougths with eerie effect through his "Alton Locke," possessed him so thoroughly that he would seem to have forgotten, for a little, all but the clamant wants of Labour. It is a dangerous extreme that is reached when one hears such a battle cry from the mob, as goes thrilling through these lines:—

"Down, down, down and down
With idler, knave, and tyrant!
Why for sluggards cark and moil?
He that will not live by toil
Has no right on English soil!
God's word's our warrant."

This simply courts one class of social and political dangers to avoid and remedy another. A reformer becomes so enamoured of his cause that he can see nothing laid to its charge with impunity, and he forgets that others, less earnest and less energetic, are not likely to be keeping pace with him. His own intention is as good as possible; he probably feels that he is carrying out exactly what he proposed to himself at the outset; and he fails to see that his followers misunderstand his motive and misapprehend his aim. Kingsley aimed at abuses, and thought the nobility and gentry had only to have their eyes opened to their duty in

order to show themselves worthy of their position. Hence came these impassioned stanzas, and hence also came mistakes of the multitude and the apparently false attitude of the poet-reformer. The writer himself, in the character of seer, may very well understand his own meaning when he exclaims—

“The night is past, behold the sun !
The idols fall, the lie is done !”

But those for whom he is working may take a wrong view of “the idols,” and their interpretation of “the lie” may be altogether amiss. On the whole, however, Kingsley must get credit for noble effort in social reform, and for brilliant achievement as well. The best poem of those he wrote in connexion with the unrest of 1848-9 is also the one that is least objectionable in regard to its social doctrines. It is entitled “The Bad Squire ;” and every reader, whatever may be his opinion of squires as a class or of any particular squire, must acknowledge not only the weird power of the wail that penetrates the stanzas but also the righteousness of the implied cause. A poacher may not be a character that deserves the encouragement and protection of society, but at any rate he cannot but command our sympathy—nay, in exceptional circumstances, something very like our respect—if he has fought for his own hand against odds that have been forced upon him. There is fine dramatic propriety in the way the poet introduces the poacher’s widow declaiming against the injustice of the bad squire, and pointing out that, while her husband perhaps was bad in the abstract, he was relatively to the squire an innocent and even an heroic man.

“You made him a poacher yourself, squire,
When you’d give neither work nor meat,
And your barley-fed hares robbed the garden
At our starving children’s feet.”

The only drawback to the perfection of the woman’s argument is the consideration that perhaps, after all, the squire was not bound to give the poacher (whom he or his keepers had shot) a chance of earning an honest livelihood. The man may have had a perfect right to a wife and family ; but was he doing his best for them if he shot the squire’s game for their behoof ? Such reflections as these, however, come only after some deliberation ; for the poem is so skilfully drawn as to evoke and sustain the sympathy throughout.

One feels, somehow, that the squire labours under a responsibility, and this feeling is intensified as the scornfully alludes to the paltry charity that comes at (by way of sin-offering) from the great house with which cannot help associating her supreme grief.

"Can your lady patch hearts that are breaking
With handfuls of coal and rice?
Or by dealing out flannel and sheeting
A little below cost price?"

But, whatever logical objections may be brought against such a poem as this, its artistic qualities will remain substantial and true. If we look away from this group of poems to the poet's early pieces we recognize, and acknowledge at once, in such a poem as "The Outlaw," the artistic spirit and treatment. The poet is looking from the point of view of his subject. He may believe in him, may not—and our anxieties on the subject are small—he presents us with an ideal, and we duly appreciate the gift. Here we are wholly with the poacher, footpad, whatever he may be, and give not a thought to the law to whom he preys. That is, we are now above political controversy and in the regions of poetry. Who has not admired the graceful symmetry of that famous closing record of which is in these brave words—

"He played a spring and danced it round
Beneath the gallows tree?"

Nobody wishes to hear a single detail of the wayward life, the presence of such an heroic climacteric, which, on the contrary, holds manifold spectators breathless, and as it were spell-bound. Kingsley has struck the right key in "The Outlaw" of his, who declares to his mother the impossibility for him of dreary unimpassioned prose. He is the heroic freebooter who finds his way on the peat-moorland, such a noble gangrel loon as would have lighted both the imagination and the vision of Christopher North. The three closing stanzas fitly declare the scope and their poetical merit is so great that they deserve attention.

"Oh, the wafts o' heather honey, and the music o' the brae,
As I watch the great harts feeding, nearer, nearer a' the day,
Oh, to hark the eagle screaming, sweeping, ringing round the sky
That's a bonnier life than stumbling over the muck to colt and k

And when I'm ta'en and hangit ; mither, a brittling o' my deer,
 Ye'll no leave your bairn to the corbie craws, to dangle in the air ;
 But ye'll send up my twa douce brethren, and ye'll steal me frae the tree,
 And bury me up on the brown brown muirs, where I have loved to be,
 Ye'll bury me 'twixt the brae and the burn, in a glen far away,
 Where I may hear the heathcock crow, and the great harts bray ;
 And gin my ghaist can walk, mither, I'll go glowing at the sky,
 The livelong night on the black hill sides where the dun deer lie. "

Several others of the early poems display this power of imaginative abstraction, this clear rising out of the bustle of actual circumstances into the clearer and calmer atmosphere of creative reflection. There is among them a lyric entitled "Sing Heigh-ho!" which has movement, energy, and romance of an Elizabethan character ; and there are various metrical experiments, which show that the young poet had been doing what Coleridge advised in reference to Mr. Tennyson's poetical apprenticeship, namely, ringing the changes by way of getting the mastery over his art. It is what Shakespeare did in his early poems also, and probably at the very time when some systematic biographers would have it that he was engaged in the shambles, or at the very highest mixing potions for vigorous digestions. One never knows where the young poet may be busily fulfilling his destiny, and what his chosen means may be. He may be with Chapman's Homer in his garret when he ought to be sleeping, or he may walk in glory and in joy

" Following his plough along the mountain side."

In any case when the Muse has found him, the future gets a certain determination, and the rest is a matter of time. Kingsley's early work at versification proves that the inspiration had come ; and it proves, moreover, what is of hardly less importance, that there had come with it the sense of style and the resolve to attain unto artistic firmness, ease, and beauty. A sonnet "On an Illuminated Missal" shows that he had worked diction that marks the sixteenth century and backwards, while "The Weird Lady," "The New Forest Ballad," and "The Red King" are specimens of workmanship that clearly prepare the way for some of the poet's very best efforts. There is the true ballad ring in these stanzas.

" The forest laws were sharp and stern,
 The forest blood was keen ;
 They lasted together for life and death
 Beneath the hollies green.

The metal good and the walnut wood
Did soon in flinders flee ;
They tost the orts to south and north,
And grappled knee to knee."

The whole ballad is good as an imitation, and it has independent excellence besides. It has clearness, movement, and substantial melody that belong to the poet himself. It prepares us, too, for poems like "Airly Beacon," "The Sands of Dee," and "The Three Fishers," in which there is concentrated purpose, judgment, insight into pathetic circumstance, and a degree of metrical nicety. The second and fourth stanzas of "The Sands of Dee" are among the poet's most successful pieces of versification. The words are excellently well chosen and placed, the movement is not too much varied, and the whole is onomatopœic, pathetic, and weird lingering :—

"The western tide crept up along the sand,
And o'er and o'er the sand,
And round and round the sand,
As far as eye could see,
The rolling mist came down and hid the land ;
And never home came she.

They rowed her in across the rolling foam,
The cruel crawling foam,
The cruel hungry foam,
To her grave beside the sea,
But still the boatmen near her call the cattle home
Across the sands of Dee."

It is in his poems of this class that Kingsley reaches his highest artistic level. They are always, at first sight, indefinite and apparently elliptical, thus leaving the casual reader in a state of irritating perplexity. That is, of course, exactly what they should be, as students of the sturdy old English ballads are aware. Worthy readers of such poetry wish their patience and their ingenuity to be taxed a little, and their satisfaction is perfect when they find that the weird suggestiveness and the pathos are at length their own adequate explanation. There is, after all, no ellipsis, and the appearance of mystery vanishes in presence of vigorous intuition. Of course, in the case of all these poems, the themes are comparatively simple ; and thus, one would say, the process of concentrating and compacting would not be one of very great difficulty. That may be, but in any case it is done ; and there is still room for further

effort in the same sphere. It is something to set to our poet's credit that he should have put together, fitted in, and polished such an amount of narration, reflection, and pathetic sentiment, when we remember that our literature contains such a gorgeous but expansive fragment as "Christabel." Had such a business-like respect for style been possible for Coleridge as was characteristic of Kingsley, one of the greatest lyric poems in any language would not have been left as a tantalizing fragment to posterity. Nobody, of course, will for a moment suppose that what is implied in this distinction is that Coleridge's poetry would have been better had it resembled Kingsley's more closely—*Di avertant!*—but it is one of Kingsley's merits that he understood proportion considerably better than Coleridge and other great poetical artists. A detailed study of "The Three Fishers" and "Earl Haldan's Daughter" will readily prove this. Both imply long, and even intricate, narratives; and yet the one has only three stanzas and the other four. The success of both lies in the fact that nothing essential is missed, that the poet never degenerated into the artistic dissipation which would

" Hunt half a day for a forgotten dream,"

and that he had faith in the intuitions and the imagination of others. What a story is told in these two lines, specially for wives waiting in the gloaming for the return of their husbands from sea !

" They looked at the squall, and they looked at the shower,
And the night-rack came rolling up ragged and brown."

The song on "Earl Haldan's Daughter" is not only a musical little ballad, but it is at the same time a pithy sermon on the ruthless prevalence of practical irony. The young lady walks by the sea-side rejoicing in the reflection that her own adventurous knight will soon return, and bring with him the locks of six princesses to be her marriage fee. The valiant lover of some other damsel sails towards the shore full of his own mission; and this is the result :—

" He leapt into the water,
That rover young and bold;
He gript Earl Haldan's daughter,
He clipt her locks of gold :

Our Modern Poets.

Go weep, go weep, proud maiden,
The tale is full to-day
Now hey bonny boat, and ho bonny boat !
Sail westward ho away ! ”

Whatever may be his subject Kingsley is always in the middle of it with his vigorous sympathy, sentiment, and his unobtrusive manliness. He detects any feebleness in what the poet means as admiration for, just because his own personal experiences have borne with tawdry frippery and lack of reality. Total failure must go the way of its deserts. Seen with the young lady and her golden hair; further illustrated in the grimly humorous narrative of *Oubit*.” Minor poets should take warning, then, from this instructive fate :—

“ This feckless hairy oubit cam’ hirpling by the linn
A swirl o’ wind cam’ down the glen, and blew that o
O when he took the water, the saumon fry they rose
And tigg’d him a’ to pieces sma’, by head and tail a

The poet’s innate vigour and breadth and force lead him not to rejoice in the north-east wind or the death bed talk of “ *The Last Buccaneer*.” He sees to him that there is the possibility of gaining a capering nimbly in a lady’s chamber; he vast other side of the alternative.

“ Let the luscious south wind
Breathe in the lovers’ sighs,
While the lazy gallants
Bask in ladies’ eyes.
What does he but soften
Heart alike and pen ?
’Tis the hard grey weather
Breeds hard Englishmen.
What’s the soft south-wester ?
’Tis the ladies’ breeze,
Bringing home their true loves
Out of all the seas ;
But the black north-easter,
Through the snow-storm hurried !
Drives our English hearts of oak
Seaward round the world.”

It was, no doubt, this same buoyancy of sympathy with energetic endeavour, and hatred of injustice, that led to his selection of the story of Elizabeth and the dire punishment of Andromeda for poetical treatment. Both are experiments

is remarkably successful. "The Saint's Tragedy" is not marked by much grasp of dramatic possibility, but it will always command the attention of the enlightened minority for its individualized strength and its steadfastness of purpose, for its combination of poetical grace and contempt for ecclesiastical trumpery. The sad story of the Hungarian martyr is stamped with a strong hand into this dramatic framework, and at the same time a determined thrust is made at the pretentious absurdities of Roman Catholic superciliousness. The painful discipline of the young candidate for saintly distinction is forcibly depicted in front of a significant background of hideous and despicable priestcraft. Some of the incidental lyrics—as, for example, "Oh! that we two were Maying," and the "Crusaders' Chorus"—are marked by spontaneity of sentiment and richness and delicacy of cadence: but there is no particular excellence in the blank verse, which is rather, indeed, wanting in elaboration. Conrad the priest, who plans that Elizabeth should forego earthly distinction and become a saint in haste, is the character with finest dramatic features, and some of his speeches are well drawn. It is not difficult to understand why a priest should speak in these terms, if we remember that the conversation of which it is a part was conceived in Kingsley's youth:—

"Let doctrines be;
Thou shalt be judged by thy works: so see to them,
And let divines split hairs: dare all thou canst;
Be all thou darest;—that will keep thy brains full.
Have thy tools ready, God will find thee work—
Then up, and play the man. Fix well thy purpose—
Let one idea, like an orb'd sun,
Rise radiant in thine heaven; and then round it
All doctrines, forms, and disciplines will range
As dim parhelia, or as needful clouds,
Needful, but mist-begotten, to be dashed
Aside, when fresh shall serve thy purpose better."

In "Andromeda" we have one of the best perhaps, indeed, the very best in point of form—of English hexameter poems. It is rich with classical reminiscence and dainty in its English suggestiveness. Readers of Ovid will appreciate the description of Theseus, as he approaches to do battle with the monster that tortures Andromeda on her rock:—

"A boy in the bloom of manhood,
Golden-haired, ivory-limbed, ambrosial; over his shoulder
Hung for a veil of his beauty the gold-fringed folds of the goat-skin,

Bearing the brass of his shield, as the sun flashed clear on its clearness.
Curved on his thigh lay a falchion, and under the gleam of his helmet
Eyes more blue than the main shone awful ; around him Athena
Shed in her love such grace, such state, and terrible daring.
Hovering over the water he came, upon glittering pinions,
Living, a wonder, outgrown from the tight-laced gold of his sandals ;
Bounding from billow to billow, and sweeping the crests like a sea-gull ;
Leaping the gulfs of the surge, as he laughed in the joy of his leaping."

The following description of sun-rise is particularly good, showing firm grasp of landscape, idyllic tenderness, and richness of metrical effect :—

"Then on the ridges of the hills rose the broad bright sun in his glory,
Hurling his arrows abroad on the glittering crests of the surges.
Gilding the soft round bosoms of wood, and the downs of the coastland ;
Gilding the weeds at her feet, and the foam-laced teeth of the ledges ;

High in the far-off glens rose thin blue curls from the homesteads ;
Softly the low of the herds, and the pipe of the out-going herdsman,
Slid to her ear on the water, and melted her heart into weeping.
Shuddering, she tried to forget them ; and straining her eyes to the seaward,
Watched for her doom, as she wailed, but in vain, to the terrible Sun-God."

It is an interesting comment on Coleridge's advice to young literary men that Kingsley should have taken the place he did as a churchman, and yet written so much prose and verse of a high order as awaits the reader of his collected volumes. It is out of his superabundant energy and earnestness that he speaks and sings. Despite his enthusiasm and his extraordinary efforts in matters of practical life, he worked with reverence and patient zeal for the sphere of noble intuition and spiritual prowess. The highest duty of all he conceived to be the strong effort after self-perfection through noble doing.

"Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever,
Do noble things, not dream them, all day long ;
And so make life, death, and that vast for-ever
One grand, sweet song."



WHAT WILL SOCIETY SAY?

A NOVEL.

By MERVYN MERRITON.

Author of "Romances of the Chivalric Ages," "The Ring-woods of Ringwood," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SIX months had elapsed since the performance of the "School for Scandal" at Middleford, and it was now the middle of May.

"The happy family," as Lumley Berrington derisively styled that of Lentworth Hall, had—so said the fashionable papers—quitted the family seat in Middleshire for the family mansion in Belgrave Square.

At this latter abode Claude Cotherstone was a guest, neither less frequent nor less welcome than of yore. He happened to be, just at present, more than ordinarily *desuuvré*. His Magsby campaign had proved an infructuous one. Much to Auntie Ogg's chagrin it turned out that Mr. Magsby had views for the settlement of his two daughters entirely antagonistic to her own. He was an intensely narrow-minded man, stupidly prejudiced against the aristocracy *as* aristocracy; and certainly of that body, neither Claude Cotherstone, with his absurd eye-glass and his Aw!-Aw! (which he had not, while at Crowlands, thought proper to lay aside), nor Lady Oglethorpe, with her wig, her rouge, and her loud talk, were specimens likely to modify his opinion. This of itself might not have prevented one or both the Misses Magsby from thinking otherwise on the subject; perhaps rather the reverse, seeing how commonly papas and their daughters do differ on these matters. But before Claude and his grand-aunt had been in the house forty-eight hours the two damsels were summarily whipped off into Lancashire, to visit a maiden aunt of prodigious cotton-spun wealth, who, conveniently for Mr. Magsby's views, happened just then to be rather unwell, and

feel rather lonely. Mr. Cotherstone had further, within the last few weeks, been supplanted in another and less avowable "affair" (that, in short, which Lord Windleshaw has alluded to elsewhere in so proper a spirit) by an older but richer rival. He was also, in the very serious matter of his betting, anxious to avoid all temptations to spoil his Derby book, one of the very best he had ever made, by launching out into fancy bets. For these various reasons he had been, during the last month, a more than ordinarily frequent visitor at No.—, Belgrave Square.

The relations of Frank and his mother-in-law had gone from bad to worse. It would really almost appear as if one of those beings placed by the ancients midway between gods and men, the daimon or demon, must have entered into the soul of this woman, so unreasonable in its origin, and so futile in its aim—if aim it might be said to have—was her dislike of Frank. Indeed, dislike is too feeble a term to express her feelings, detestation more befits it.

For a long time, urged thereto by his wife, Frank had borne with the inuendoes and sarcasms which Mrs. Leadstone, more or less covertly, levelled at him on every possible occasion; but at length, seeing how implacable she was, he had abandoned all attempt to conciliate her, shutting himself in a silent reserve and a frigid impassibility.

The question of a separation from the Leadstones, though never discussed, or even openly hinted at, was always hovering before the mental vision of himself and his wife, as also, be it added, of Mr. Leadstone. Neither could Mrs. Leadstone for ever close her eyes to it, and frequently, when it occurred to her, the thought would come over her how Frank, in spite of all her devices, had, Juliana aiding, proved too strong for her in the matter of the marriage, and how, Juliana again aiding, he might once more be too strong for her, were the question of the double *ménage* ever seriously raised; then, for the time being, she would deck her countenance in deceitful smiles, and draw the sharp talons within the velvet paw. Hereupon a temporary lull would ensue, and hopes arise of the possibility of permanently maintaining the *entente cordiale*.

Such, during some months, had been the internal condition of affairs at Lentworth; but now, in Belgrave Square, there was too frequently one at hand whose acute vision penetrated beneath the treacherous surface, and whom it suited, for

purposes of his own, to keep up the hostility which he plausibly affected to lament.

Frank Aylesmere's early education had not been one to give him country tastes, and after his marriage his habits became sedentary and studious rather than active and vigorous. The squire was disappointed at the little aptitude he showed for the management of a great estate, and his disinclination for field sports. There was no denying the fact that in these respects Claude Cotherstone fairly distanced him, even in Tom Leadstone's eyes, he entering more readily into agricultural mysteries, riding more boldly, being a far better shot. Here was a point against Frank on which Mrs. Leadstone failed not to dwell, sometimes jestingly, sometimes sarcastically, till at length she met with an unexpected rebuff in her husband's remarks: "After all, he's no worse than a lot of other landed men who sees nothing but through their stewards' eyes, and I begin to suspect it ain't o' no manner o' use our always draggin' him and Juliana down to Lentworth with us. Why not let 'em stay here if it suits their tastes better?"

After this Mrs. Leadstone never returned to this particular branch of the subject. In point of fact, the observation had been craftily thrown out by the squire as "a feeler," for he was becoming more and more alive to the utter absence of harmony between his wife and her son-in-law, and to the desirableness of a change in the existing domestic arrangements. But the system of scene-terrorism by which Mrs. Leadstone ruled the family, here as in other matters, prevailed, and the longer he reflected on the subject, the more he found himself face to face with the old question. Was the end to be obtained worth the tremendous scenes it would cost?

Frank's love for the works of our great dramatists—which, as regarded Shakespeare, was carried to idolatry—had survived his abandonment of the stage. Before his marriage he had commenced, and after it continued, collecting materials concerning certain of the plays most familiar to him, with some vague and indefinite views to future publication. Such cases occur in many branches of literature, and the proposed aim, if it end in airy nothing, at least becomes a spur to reading, and an incentive to accurate scholarship.

In its early stage the pursuit of this object was pleasing to Juliana, since it kept her husband in her society, she passing

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much of her time in his study with her work or her dream, but in process of time her mother's frequent remarks "premature book-worms"—"husbands tied to their apron strings"—"stay-at-home men for ever in a way"—and so on, had the effect of making her wish (wisely) that Frank would shape his ways more after the fashion of other young men, who have no other object but to kill time and follow their pleasures.

Colonel Briarly, who had greatly rejoiced at Frank's success, and liked his niece, took a view of the subject amidst it were, between those of Juliana and Mrs. Leadstone.

"Why don't you get into Parliament?" he asked one morning, when Frank and Juliana called upon him in James's Street. "That's the line for a scholarly gentleman."

Frank replied that, setting aside the question of expediency, which was entirely for his father-in-law's consideration, his tastes were not that way inclined, nor did he regard knowledge as sufficiently practical.

"Tastes and knowledge be hanged," cried the Colonel, "I should like to know how many M.P.'s have any taste or knowledge except of what is called *Stuff* and nonsense, Frank! But I see the secret of your apathy. Some fellow—I believe Lumley Berrisford remarked, and he was quite right, that no actor ever became famous in anything but acting. All that confounds the theatre business!—There, now, don't argue! Pray, dear Juliana, don't let him argue—as I see he's inclined to do. My nerves won't bear argument. I've given my opinion, and it's not acceptable. I've done with the business. Pray let me hear no more about it." For this explanation, often indulged in a senile fractiousness in its way, was difficult to cope with as that of Mrs. Leadstone herself.

No great success, as we all know, is to be obtained by pursuing one leading object without the sacrifice of some other good. Where a man's fame and fortune are staked upon success, the sacrifice even of a portion of his domestic affections may become necessary; but when a man, for mere pastime, risks this sacrifice, his conduct is scarcely justified. Now, Frank Aylesmere, out of his devotion to his "Shakespearian Annotations and Illustrations," had a fair way to render himself liable to a charge coming upon this head; partly, no doubt, in his desire to keep clear

dreaded mother-in-law, but mainly from the fascination which the occupation possessed for him.

On several occasions, since returning from Lentworth Hall, Juliana, having asked him to ride out with her, had received some such reply as, "Indeed, dearest, I cannot; I'm in the vein for work this morning, and you know, unless I seize thoughts as they pass, I lose them altogether."

"Very well, Frank dear," she would reply, "I'll ask my father; I dare say he'll be free."

On some occasions her father was free, and did ride with her; but on several, when he did not, and she set out alone, it so happened that she returned under the escort of the Honourable Claude Cotherstone.

On two of these occasions, Colonel Briarly, driving in his curricule, met his pretty niece and her cavalier, and he noted the fact, promising to himself, the next time he should see his nephew, to tell him that if there was in all London one man with whom a young married woman ought, less than another, to be seen riding alone, that man was the unprincipled *roué* Claude Cotherstone! But as he did not happen to come across his nephew for many days, the subject died out of his not very retentive memory, and as there was no other person among the many sharing his opinions sufficiently interested in Frank to make a similar remark to that young Benedict, no similar remark ever was made to him. As for Mr. Leadstone, habit had rendered him familiar with Claude's presence, which, moreover, was attended with the good effect of keeping Mrs. Leadstone in (comparative) good humour.

Meantime, the step from asking her husband to ride with her, only to meet with refusal—gentle, mild, smiling, still refusal—to that of planning her own rides irrespectively of her husband, was not a wide one; and to this had she come by the time the family had been two months in London.

Heartly, who, though living a laborious life, was a member of two clubs, and was by his occupation brought much into contact with people of the world, at length heard some remarks

in the names of Mrs. Aylesmere and Mr. Cotherstone unpleasantly coupled; but he had of late, owing to the vour in which Mrs. Leadstone held him, ceased to visit elgrave Square. The subject was one on which he it speak, but on which to write would be difficult, nay ely possible, he consequently perforce contented himself

with awaiting the chance of meeting Frank at some place of public resort.

Such an occasion might easily present itself, for Frank went frequently to the theatres, generally with his wife, but sometimes alone. Heartly himself was a regular attendant at one theatre—the Pantechnic. It was immaterial to him that the same “highly successful new comedy drama” was played there every night. He was present, not to see the comedy drama, but the bright particular star who shone in it. Frank went to the Pantechnic, once with his wife, once with Claude Cotherstone; but he thought the piece dull as a whole, in spite of the attractiveness of the one part written for Miss Fenton, and he returned no more; although Claude, on several occasions, urged him to go and see La Belle Fenton in that scene in the third act, so generally applauded, he reminded him, by the critics—the appeal she makes to her lover, in such and such circumstances, declared by those sages to be one of the most dramatic situations to be found in any piece of our time!

“La Fenton seems to have made an impression on you, Claude,” Frank said, on one of these occasions.

“I’m not singular,” he answered. “Haven’t you heard about Lord Fallowfield?”—“What of Lord Fallowfield?”

“Why, only this—he’s so desperately smitten, in love he thinks, and says, that he has offered her his earl’s coronet.”

“Indeed! Pray what sort of a man is he?”

“An ass. But then, you know, an ass with over thirty thousand a year. For the rest, as good natured a creature as one often sees.”

“She would not be the first Lady Teazle who has worn a coronet, Claude, and I’ll warrant she’d wear it right well.”

“Aye, Frank, and bring to the Fallowfield family those brains it is so sadly in want of.”

“Brains and heart as well,” cried Frank, impulsively.

“Heart!—Humph!—I’ve no very profound belief in the existence of that article behind the footlights. Of course there are exceptions, and here may be one. You should be a good judge, Frank, you’ve known Marie long enough—and well enough—eh? Is’nt it so?”

Now Frank had never spoken to Claude of his past acquaintance with Marie Duhamel, beyond generally saying that he had known her, in early youth, at Boulogne. Indeed, neither

to his own wife—whose latent tendency to jealousy he suspected—nor to her parents had he ever mentioned the fact of his having lodged in the same house with her and Oldham. Consequently, when he marked the particularly meaning look with which Claude accompanied the foregoing question, he hesitated for a few moments before replying that all he knew, or had heard of Marie Duhamel, tended to give him the highest opinion of her character. And then, in spite of Claude's transparent efforts to the contrary, he turned the conversation on other subjects.

The meeting sought by Heartly with Frank never occurred, because the latter never returned to the only theatre frequented by the former. In the meantime, it had become apparent even to Mrs. Leadstone that Juliana was making herself remarkable with Claude Cotherstone; but, blinded by her dislike of Juliana's husband, instead of speaking to her on the subject, she placed it in the arsenal of her weapons to be, perchance, used in due season against the said husband.

Whether Claude himself felt that he was drawing attention upon Mrs. Aylesmere, whether he believed his ultimate object would best be served by change of tactics, or whether the time had now come when business must displace pleasure, it is certain that during the racing season his dangle in Belgrave Square fell off considerably.

At Ascot, as at Epsom, he came off a heavy winner. The Newmarket July meeting proved, if not profitable, comparatively innocuous, after which, being a cool calculator rather than a gambler, and seeking profit rather than excitement on the turf, he shut up his metallic, resolved to make no book on future events during the present racing season, and rest satisfied with £11,000 odd which he had netted—and received.

It was then, flushed with success, that towards the close London season he reappeared at No.—, Belgrave in his chosen rôle of *ami de la maison*.

very glad to see you again, Claude." Thus Frank addressed him the first time they met alone in the library, a room generally regarded as sacred to Frank.

to to you, dear boy."

fact is, Claude, I want to consult you."

Then of course you'll stand a fee," taking a cigar from the chimney-piece, and lighting a vesta.

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"Please sit down in that arm-chair, keep your eyes—Hear me and perpend!"

Here followed a pause, during which two cigars

"Now then, Frank, what is it?"

"You're a good reader of characters, Claude, and a clear judgment—you are without prejudice tolerably *au fait* of all the ins and outs of our f

Another pause, during which, while the speaker inhaled a mouthful of the fragrant smoke, and then he puffed it out again, the listener sat in silence, in token of his acquiescence in the quadrup submitted to him.

"You've had ample opportunity to form an opinion on the results of our double *ménage*, which has now had three weeks of a year's trial; you're aware that it's broken down, and you well know through whom it's broken down. Friend to all here as you are, can you be better able to answer the question I'm asking you—Is the system worth a further trial?"

It was not till Claude had availed himself of the pretext for delay furnished by the coquette that the man is permitted to practise with a cigar of his own that he said, "Before I answer you, I must say that whatever passes between us is to be regarded as confidential, and that you will not—even to your friends—repeat any opinion I may express."

"I quite agree to that, Claude."

"Not excepting even your wife?"

"I will say especially not to my wife."

"Very good, Frank. To begin. I think, some time thought, you must have in you the fortitude of old martyrs of old were made of, to have endured the persecution so long as you have done. But now that I first knew how this double *ménage*, even with the wildest temper, must end. It has had the first trial. It has, as you say, utterly broken down. In the interest of all, I would advise its discontinuance at this moment! Supposing—I say supposing—you consent to it. For there, I apprehend, is *the* question."

"Oh there is no doubt in the world I can put it to you if—"
"If—Well?"

"If I'm determined to do it."

"Humph ! Turn the sentence otherwise, and say—If you have the courage to do it. You see, Frank, I may now and here, chop off one of my hands with the other—if I have the courage to do it. Have you the courage in this matter to face—less Mrs. Leadstone than Mrs. Aylesmere ? That's the question I ask you."

"With your usual penetration, Claude, you've hit the blot. The exact question is whether I shall or shall not receive from Juliana the full amount of support necessary."

"You appear, Frank, to be taking it for granted that Mrs. Leadstone will oppose the separation. Don't you think it possible she might be brought to take a rational view of the thing ?"

"You should know, Claude, that Mrs. Leadstone never takes a rational view of anything opposed to her own desires. No, no—she'll fight to the death."

"How about the Squire ?"

"He'll be with me in opinion, but he'll never have the resolution to back me up strongly. All will depend on Juliana."

"But surely your wife sees the thing as you do ?"

"Undoubtedly she does." But her mother possesses a fatal influence over her. At a certain point she invariably gives in. Mrs. Leadstone will make her believe she will die if deprived of her, or something equally preposterous, and the poor girl's combative powers will collapse !

"Hang it, Frank, you make the case rather a hopeless one ! you only hope in Juliana, and she is certain to throw you over."

"Not quite hopeless. I consider a certain amount of fighting as inevitable; but I believe we may come off victorious if we can obtain the assistance of a sort of mediator—one who will urge moderation and calmness. Now you are the friend to all. I would ask you to undertake the office—not a pleasant one, I confess ; the greater, then, the merit in undertaking it. Will you undertake it ?"

Claude had all along foreseen the point to which Frank was coming—the point, indeed, to which his own wishes also tended. Here he was called upon to play his part of *ami de la maison* with a vengeance. Putting, then, a forcible restraint on himself, lest his countenance should betray the satisfaction he felt, he replied sententiously—"The test of friendship is sacrifice. I sincerely believe, being, as I am, the friend of you all, I am the man for the situation. My services are at your disposal."

"Thank you, Claude; I expected this of you."

"Pray don't mention it, Frank. But once more, it's quite understood that your wife is to know nothing of this conversation?"

"Nothing whatever, and that any advice you may give her comes from yourself alone."

"From myself alone." Claude replied. "And," was the secret thought that followed, "*for* myself alone."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

CLAUDE COTHERSTONE lost no time in setting about his task as "friend to all."

His earliest ambassadorial efforts were directed against Mrs. Leadstone.

The two were sitting in the drawing-room, Frank and Juliana having gone for a ride. Turning from some commonplace topic, Claude asked, "When do you think of leaving town?"

"That depends," was the answer, "upon whether we go straight to Lentworth, or just for a month to the sea-side."

Mr. Leadstone proposes the latter. He has taken it into his head that we give our young people too much of Lentworth, and suggests that he and I should take a month at the sea-side, while Juliana and her husband go their own way. He has found out that Frank Aylesmere was never cut out for a country life."

"And if I may venture to speak my mind," Claude said, "Mrs. Aylesmere herself hardly appreciates Lentworth as she might be expected to do."

"My daughter sees Lentworth—as she sees everything else in life—with her husband's eyes."

"Is not that generally considered to be a wife's duty, Mrs. Leadstone?"

"If it be so, I fear I must be classed among the undutiful wives. But you know, in order that one person should see with another's eyes, the two must have the same thoughts, feelings, tastes—in short, there must be entire harmony between them."

"Surely there is the very perfection of harmony between your daughter and Frank."

"I suppose there is."

"Do you doubt it?"

"Mr. Cotherstone, can any mortal read another's heart?"

"Certainly my friend Frank is a little—Ahem! shall I say inscrutable?"

"Do *you* think so?" she asked, pouncing on this like a kite on a young pigeon that has unexpectedly fluttered in sight.

"I know it," he answered, mysteriously and significantly.

"Ah! I understand. Between man and man—*dessous de cartes*—not for female inspection. Poor women! Poor women!"

"Oh! come, come, Mrs. Leadstone! If you put interpretations of your own on my words I shall be afraid of opening my mouth about other people."

"Don't fear my getting you into a scrape with your friend Frank."—She laid a peculiar emphasis on the word "friend."—"Bless you, I'm discretion itself!"

"My dear Mrs. Leadstone, I must beg you to forget that I have said anything at all about my friend Frank. You named him, and I——But dear me"—looking at the clock, and starting up in affected astonishment—"Time has gone so rapidly with your agreeable conversation, that I have overstayed an appointment. I must really rush away."

"But, Mr. Cotherstone!—about Frank—"

"Pardon me, my dear lady. I have let fall a word I had better have kept to myself. It was too strong. Pray think no more of it. You know one doesn't always weigh one's words exactly. You'd better forget it, indeed you had! Good morning! good morning! I shan't fail to call to-morrow."

"Yes; pray come. Let's say about twelve. I shall have talked over our plans with Mr. Leadstone"—Then, to herself, as the door closed upon her visitor—"Inscrutable! That's a word I shall not forget!"

Indeed, Claude had deliberately "let fall" that word with the intention that she should not forget it.

But how is it that he has not yet uttered one word having direct reference to the important question of the double *ménage*, on which he has undertaken to exercise ambassadorial functions? Mr. Claude has his own way of doing things, and we may be sure his apparent inactivity on this point is a masterly inactivity.

The immediate effect of the word he had "let fall" was to add a deeper shade to the scowl with which Mrs. Leadstone would, from time to time, survey her son-in-law.

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Claude's next step in advance, purporting—all to the contrary notwithstanding—to bear upon double *ménage* question, was taken with Juliana.

"Have you seen Miss Fenton off the stage since to London?" he asked her.

Juliana replied in the negative. She had written a note of simple politeness, congratulating her continued success and rising reputation. Marie had thanked her, hoping she would come and see new play then in rehearsal—No more.

"Nothing was said on either side about visiting asked.

"Nothing. Indeed, Frank seems to think it well to avoid any intimacy."

"Indeed?"

"On account of my mother's very strong opposition against everything theatrical."

"Humph!" And Claude seemed to reflect, as explanation had occasioned him a certain surprise he resumed, "So, then, Frank puts forward mother's prejudices—and she certainly has the pretext allude to—as a—a sort of pretext for your avoiding intimacy with the rising actress?"

"Pretext, Mr. Cotherstone!"

"Did I say pretext? I hardly meant to use the term; for—speaking after your dear good mother's fashion—pretext is explained, by Johnson and of ostensible reason, a colour given to any act."

"And of course you did not mean to intimate the ostensible reason for my avoiding intimacy with other than his real reason?"

"Oh, no! not exactly that."

"Not exactly? Do you mean anything approaching?"

"You ladies are so curious—all more or less Fatimas. I only meant to intimate that to me it seems hardly—But I see you are vexed."

"Why should I be vexed?" this with a laugh and hilarity.

"I really can't say why—anyhow, I'm sorry I touch the subject."

"But you say the reason seems to you hardly—hardly."

"Satisfactory—since you insist."

“ Why hardly satisfactory ? ”

“ Well, between ourselves, I don't imagine Frank's consideration for your excellent mother is sufficient of itself to induce him to forego the satisfaction of maintaining an intimacy with so charming a person as Miss Fenton—more particularly considering their former intimate relations. But how late it is getting! I must leave you—I've borrowed Win's brougham. He'll be wanting it to go into the city. What a memory I have! But in *your* society it's not to be wondered at. Good morning, good morning.” And by incessantly talking till he reached the door, thus preventing Juliana from further pushing her inquiries, Claude contrived to leave her under the full impression of the pang caused by the doubly envenomed sting he had planted in her heart.

“ Want of consideration for my mother. I never thought him wanting in consideration. Do others see what I am blind to? Then, again, Marie! Their former relations! What could those relations have been? Oh, absurd! An exaggerated expression. Mr. Cotherstone has a thoughtless way of speaking—saying a great deal more than he means.”

Exaggerated or not, the expression sank deep into Juliana's heart—though not deeper than was intended by him who had uttered it.

As yet, we observe, not one word respecting the double *ménage*. Nor was it till Claude had, on the following morning, buttoned Tom Leadstone, and taken to parading him round Belgrave Square, that he directly opened on the subject.

“ My dear Mr. Leadstone,” he began, “ you know if I have a sincere friendship for any family in the world it is yours. There are people who will tell you I'm incapable of friendship. Shallow readers of human nature, those, sir! But that's neither here nor there. Mrs. Leadstone has been telling me—first, though, let me beg you'll consider what I'm going to say as said in the strictest confidence. You will? Thank you—Mrs. Leadstone has been telling me you have—to use the dear lady's exact words—taken it into your head that you give your young people—meaning Mr. and Mrs. Aylesmere—too much of Lentworth, and are suggesting a month's separation from them. Now, permit me, as a family friend, to say that, in my humble opinion, such a step would be highly imprudent. You suggest it, either hoping that, during the month, Frank and his wife will miss the many advan-

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tages of living in your house, and so will return at least—cured of an unphilosophical expectation to find thornless a bed where there are thorns.

“Why, you’re getting flowery and poetical on stone; but go on.”

“Or else with a view to accustom Mrs. Leadstone to permanent separation which you regard inevitable.”

“Ah! you’ve hit it. That there’s just what I want.”

“Then, my dear sir, you have thought—thought precipitately.”

“The doose I have?”

“Yes, Mr. Leadstone, you have. As you say you had studied the interiors of families, as I have.”

“Really, Mr. Cotherstone, I didn’t believe you to study anything—unless it’s the ‘Racin’ C. Stud Book.’”

“You’re not the first person, sir, who has said that. But to return to our muttons. Rest assured with hundreds of *ménages*, your’s is a model world people can’t have their own way in ever, indeed, in anything. Young people must consult their elders, must consult their peculiarities, must consult the considerations of duty—Ahem! my saying it—Mrs. Leadstone is peculiar, sir, possessing fine qualities—but also certain peculiarities. Mr. Leadstone, I’m prepared to maintain a right to her peculiarities. She is in a position of peculiarities; and when a lady in her position, in addition to peculiarities, a daughter and a wife becomes a necessity of the situation that the persons and the peculiarities, should go on the live and let live principle; sometimes the peculiarities having the upper hand, sometimes the persons now and then—mind only now and then—

“But begad, Mr. Cotherstone!” cried the speaker, falling into Claude’s vein of banter, “in the case of the peculiarities that’s ’most eternally having the doose a turn does either daughter or son-in-law.”

“That’s so much the worse for the daughter-in-law. But don’t you think, sir, it’s their own fault?”

“Do you think so?”

"Think ; I'm certain of it. Behold me, Mr. Leadstone—such as I am—such as I have the honour to be known to you. Now, imagine me in an analogous position to that of my friend Frank. Picture to yourself my wife—I won't say as charming, for that's hardly possible—but as gentle and yielding as Mrs. Frank. Imagine *my* mother-in-law possessing peculiarities—if you like ten times more pronounced than those of the amiable lady in question——"

"Ten times more ! Begad, Mr. Cotherstone, then she'd belong to some other world than this!—He ! ha ! ha ! Go on ! go on !"

"Ha ! ha ! ha ! Well, I persist in giving her ten times more pronounced ; and I tell you, Sir—of course putting paterfamilias out of the question—I'd positively rule the house—to its own advantage, you know—most certainly to its own advantage."

"Well, Mr. Cotherstone, I must say you've both enlightened and relieved me. I was beginnin' to think there wasn't any cure for this here family complaint, but—speakin' surgically—amputation. You make me hope the limb may be kept and the body recover. Ha ! ha ! ha !"

"I'm sure"—thus Claude pursued his advantage—"the loss of your daughter's society would be, morally, to you, nothing less than the loss of a limb."

"It would, it would—not a doubt o' that."

"Then, Sir, I'll preserve to you that precious limb of your affection ; though I can't do it entirely alone, you must help me a little."

"What can I do, Mr. Cotherstone?"

"You'll simply have to do—nothing."

"That seems easy enough."

"Not quite so easy as you imagine. Still not very difficult. Both Frank and his wife believe you advocate their separation from Mr. Leadstone and yourself. I know they have reason for such belief. Now, Sir, all you have to do is to let matters take their course, and give no opinion when one shall be asked of you."

"No opinion ?"—"None whatever."

"But, hang it,—after all I'm the master here—paterfamilias, as you said ! Folks won't believe as I've no voice in the question."

"Let folks believe what folks choose. Of course, you

have a voice—and a loud one. Don't think me personal—”

“Oh, not the least! Ha! ha! ha!” For the Squire was quite conscious of his stentorian propensities.

“I say you have a voice, but it does not happen to suit you that your voice should be heard on this particular occasion; or if you like to say something that won't compromise you, meet any of the disputants who come to you, with a moral platitude or two—such, for instance, as ‘My dear girl or boy, or wife, as the case may be—it's a long lane that has no turning.’ ‘When things come to the worst they mend.’ ‘Every cloud will show you a silvery lining, if you'll only wait long enough to see it.’ In short, enact Sancho Panza to the Quixotes of Domesticity.”

Somewhat puzzled as to the form, though comprehending the spirit, of Claude's consolatory counsel, Mr. Leadstone readily promised to remain a neutral spectator of events; after which Claude released him, and each went his own way.

Possibly it was because the Squire entertained some doubt as to his own power of persistency in the line of conduct exacted from him by the “friend of all,” that the same afternoon he decided to run down next day to Lentworth on the plea of business.

This departure, deemed inopportune by Frank, Claude hailed as an unexpected stroke of luck. Having ascertained that Mr. Leadstone proposed to be away three days, he laid his plans accordingly. He had much to do; but then, with the means at his disposal, and his resolution to use those means unscrupulously and remorselessly, much might be done in three days.

When Mr. Leadstone, on the fourth day from his departure, returned to London, he found that Claude Cotherstone had quitted it the same morning, summoned suddenly away—according to a note he had written to Frank—but whither gone, or when to return, he had not mentioned. The Squire could not but remark that an unwonted tranquillity reigned in the house; everybody appearing, if not pleased with everybody else, at least anxious to avoid subjects likely to provoke unpleasant discussions.

“All's goin' on smooth!” he said to himself. “I shan't be asked for my opinion. Claude's a conjuror. What a friend to have!”

The truth was that everybody was deceiving everybody else—each being individually deceived by the arch deceiver Cotherstone, for purposes locked in his own dark bosom.

Frank, on his part, had decided to take his wife away, though perhaps not immediately; he had even gone the length of visiting half a dozen house agents, in search of a house suitable for her and himself. Juliana had been represented to him, by the "friend of all," as cognisant of his plans, though desirous not to appear so until the time should arrive for their execution.

Mrs. Leadstone more than suspected her "inscrutable" son-in-law to be meditating a severance; but she had been led—also by the "friend of all"—to suppose that, by means of revelations against him to be made to her at the proper season, she might successfully defy him to carry out his relations.

Saddest and most pitiable of all to contemplate was the extent to which Juliana's weaknesses had been practised upon; her mother's vindictiveness moreover, being utilized, and brought to bear upon the same end. Without the specification of any charge against Frank beyond the mysterious coupling of his name with that of Marie Duhamel, a vague and terrible suspicion was made to hang, like a moral pall, between the wife and the husband, while the ultimate discovery of Frank's supposed offence was artfully represented to Juliana as depending wholly on her present avoidance of arousing the culprit's suspicions. The trial to her was a terrible one. Loving her husband with all the strength of love she possessed, she gave little real credit to the charges hinted at against him. Had she followed her heart's impulses, she would have thrown herself into his arms, imploring him to tell her if there were any ground for these charges; but the poison infused into her mind by Claude's insinuations, and her mother's scarcely more distinct aspersions, checked her heart's impulses even when they were strongest within her.

Claude's plausibility was sufficient to blind the most wary; and indeed the characteristic of inscrutability which it had suited him to fix upon Frank was entirely applicable to himself; but it was scarcely credible that Juliana should have allowed herself to be powerfully swayed by her mother in any matter where Frank was concerned. Such an end could only have been—as it was—compassed by the appliance of

means as exceptional as they were unjustifiable. If the shadow of a palliation could be found for Mrs. Leadstone, it existed in the fact that she herself was, throughout this bad affair, but a tool in the hands of Claude.

There probably neither exists nor has ever been a woman wholly inaccessible to jealousy; if single competitor for, if married, as the possessor of, the object, that she is liable to the action of this power. The sway of jealousy in a woman's heart will, as a proportion to the love she bears a man. There is, a love of a spurious, dog-in-the-manger sort, which a woman say of her lover or husband—"I don't care for him myself, but I won't allow any other woman to have him more!" The love which thus shows itself degrading, not an ennobling, character, forming of its own, and may be left aside in the consideration of the question.

Jealousy, then, if once roused in the breast of a woman as Juliana Aylesmere, ardent, trusting, and with exaggerated views of life, was capable of leading to such results; and that it would lead to such results, that those results might be made to serve his own ends, manifested the conviction of the individual who had the first seeds of this jealousy.

The nature of those ends may be pretty well guessed, but as they will shortly develop their action, to allude to them more particularly at this time would be to anticipate the course of events.

CHAPTER XXXV.

CLAUDE COTHERSTONE'S sudden departure from London had not been altogether premeditated. It was, to a certain extent, forced upon him by circumstances foreign to his purpose, although he saw in those very circumstances an additional prop to the edifice he was constructing. More he believed that, during his absence, the elements which he had cast into the Leadstone could be left to seethe, ferment, and throw up their own abomination. Had his materials been less carefully selected he would have feared lest some unlooked for

might upset all his calculations, and thus perchance—in his own racing slang—have caused the pot to boil over. But he had no fear of such mischance ; and he went.

He left London in consequence of the pressing request of that Lord Fallowfield to whom reference has been made as a candidate for the hand of the Star of the Pantechnic.

“The deuce is in it,” Claude said to himself, “if I can’t get something for myself out of this shindy among those theatre people ! Besides, the whole thing looks like fun, and there’s no reason why I shouldn’t have a little fun while on my way to business.”

The explanation of this “shindy among those theatre people” will carry us back a few weeks in point of time.

The Earl of Fallowfield, in whom the theatrical world recognized the ‘financing party’ of the Folies Dramatiques, had, a short time back—as was also generally known to the theatrical world—wearying of his toys, as spoilt children will weary of theirs, at once parted with his ‘interest’ in the theatre, and bidden a final adieu to the lady manager of the establishment. Parting with his interest was a mere euphemism for paying Mr. Glaskin fifteen thousand pounds in hard cash to take the concern, with all its liabilities, off his hands. Bidding adieu to Miss St. Lawrence, being legally interpreted, meant settling one thousand pounds sterling per annum on her for the term of her natural life.

But although he had done with theatrical management, it appeared that the Earl had not done with theatrical people, since forthwith he had commenced the prosecution of his love suit with Miss Fenton. Nowise daunted by the modicum of encouragement “Lady Teazle” gave him, he gradually rose in his biddings till, from laying his fortune—or a considerable portion of it—he arrived at laying his Earl’s coronet, at her feet.

No secrets ooze out more readily than stage secrets, and though Heartley had only on two occasions passed through the Pantechnic stage door during the daytime, and had never once entered the magic circle of the green room, the news of “Miss Fenton’s extraordinary good fortune” had been whispered to him in the strictest confidence. He asked Mr. Oldham what amount of truth—if any—there was in the report. That stolid personage replied that he had himself also heard the report—merely as a report—but

that his step-daughter had not even mentioned the subject to him. The painter derived no very great amount of consolation from this answer, being aware of Marie's extreme reticence in all private and personal matters.

One day, to his surprise, the Vicomte de Foix's card was sent up to his studio, now transferred to the Regent's Park quarter. He knew the Vicomte had of late been occasionally in London, having more than once met him at the Pantechnic, and having heard Frank mention visits which the lively Frenchman had made, and dinners to which he had been invited, in Belgrave Square; but he was not aware that the Vicomte even knew his (Heartley's) address.

The Vicomte followed his card, without waiting for further formalities. "Ah! ce cher ami!" Thus he accosted the painter, "How happy I am to have found you! I dined yesterday chez ce brave homme, Monsieur le Squire Leston."—Note that in pronouncing, 'Squire' à la française, he made it something like 'Squeere.'—"I asked la divine Madame Aylesmere de vos nouvelles. She said—and I thought with much regret—you have estranged yourself from that house, gave me your address—et me voici! Your looks ask me for what I am here?—Réponse—a small commission—a visit of business, mon cher!"

"I am at your service, Monsieur le Vicomte. What is it? Ah, you are looking at that portrait. You know the original."

"Well, mon cher Heartley—too well!—and my commission—entendez-vous?—concerns that identical portrait."

"Indeed?"

"Oui, très—cher. I knew from Aylesmere you had painted cette ravissante personne in days past. I desire to have a copy of it."

"A copy, Vicomte?"—"Oui—en petit."

"But, Vicomte, I must tell you——"

"You will remind me that elle est artiste—and that I can buy her photographs."

"I was not about to tell you that, Vicomte," said Heartley, with rather a bitter smile;" but *you* remind *me* that she is in some sort, public property—an actress—of whose likeness you, or the first comer, can buy, at a shilling each, dozen varieties."

"Allons donc! with your cartes de visite. It is not such likenesses I want."

"But, Vicomte, this likeness of Miss Fenton is my property. She has the fac-simile in her own possession."

"In Torrington-square. I saw it there."

"Ah!—you—you have been at her house?"

"I have—on three occasions."

"You and I never met there."

"No, but I scarcely ever see her without hearing your name pronounced."—The speaker was still contemplating Marie's portrait, so did not remark the glow of satisfaction which overspread Heartley's honest countenance.—"She always speaks of you with a certain enthusiasm—as *l'ami de son vieux père*."

"Son père! Ha! ha! ha! Poor Oldham!" And Heartley laughed, not disappointedly, as might have been supposed; for the idea presenting itself to him was, "She must think kindly of me, if it is worth her while to give this chattering Frenchman a reason for so speaking of me."

Lovers will sometimes pick up thankfully very minute crumbs of comfort.

"Eh bien!" the Vicomte proceeded, as he withdrew his eyes from the portrait; "granting this to be your property, will you paint me a small copy of it—*en aquarelle*? In this style—or this?"—pointing to some beautiful and highly finished portraits in the style he indicated, which hung round the room. "As to the price, *mon cher*——"

"Never mind the price, Vicomte. If I paint it for you I shall request you to accept it."

"Mais non! Mais non, Heartley!"

"Mais oui! Mais oui, Vicomte! I will never never *sell* a portrait of—Ahem!—Mr. Oldham's step-daughter! But, what is more to the purpose, I will not paint it at all without her express permission."

"Ah, Diable! you are a strange painter."

"You place me in a strange position. I have no reason to suppose Miss Fenton will refuse—but she may."

"Eh bien, *mon cher*! I will be loyal with you, I fear she *will* refuse."

"May I ask why?"

"You know Sir R. A. painted her as 'Lady Teazle'?"

"I do. Well?"

"Milord Fallowfield desired a copy, and gave the order to Sir R. A., who commenced it without asking her permis-

sion. She heard of it, and told Milord she could not sanction this copy."

"Humph! You see, Vicomte, Lord Fallowfield is peculiarly situated as regards Miss Fenton. It does not follow that the same objection would apply to every other person,"

"Comment?—every other person?"

"Other persons than Lord Fallowfield;—yourself, for instance."

"Myself, for instance! Ha! ha! ha! Mon très—cher, you speak of things you do not understand." The Vicomte said this with a fatuous air peculiarly French, after which he rose from his seat, took several strides—his strides were not very long at the longest—up, down, and across the studio, to the imminent peril of sundry unfinished pictures reposing in dusty array against the wainscot, paused for a few moments beneath Marie's portrait, then turning with an unnaturally tragic scowl upon his bright good-humoured countenance, to Heartley, continued, "Monsieur le peintre, exactly the same objection exists in our two cases!"

"Our's! what! Lord Fallowfield! and——"

"Mine! Le Comte de Fallowfield loves Mademoiselle Fenton—Moi, Monsieur, je l'adore!—Entendez-vous, Monsieur? Je l'idolâtre—There, Ami Heartley—le mot est lâché!"—Here the speaker beat continuously and rapidly upon the region of his heart."—"This, voyez-vous—*this* has passed from my possession into hers. Henceforth you behold in me her slave!" Then, resuming his peripatetic movements, the Vicomte proceeded to relate how he had written to and called upon la belle Fenton—how he had endeavoured to prove to her that the Paris stage was the real arena for the display of her grand talent—how he had ultimately told her there was one who would too gladly make a fairy home for her amid the délices of Paris—that one being himself, yes, himself, Gaston Vicomte de Foix! How she had replied that the first proposal required much consideration, the second much more; that each should receive what was its due. How she had at length declined to transfer her triumphs to the Paris stage, and had uttered the banalite so often resorted to by women, the assurance that in default of her love, he might rely on always possessing her friendship — "a miserable substitute," he concluded, "though perhaps preferable to absolute dismissal; and you

know, as we others say, 'Quand on n'a pas ce qu'on aime, il faut aimer ce qu'on a.' "

"A most philosophical conclusion, Vicomte; and so, in default of the actual original, you wish to possess a copy—of a copy?"

"Precisely so, cher peintre."

"Then, under the circumstances, I have a notion that I shall obtain Miss Fenton's permission to make you a copy. I believe she has a sincere regard and esteem for you."

"That is also my opinion, Monsieur Heartley, and, entre nous, I doubt whether she has the same for Milord Fallowfield."

"Do you?" asked Heartley with much eagerness.

"Mais quand même," resumed de Foix, knitting his brows, and twisting his well-waxed moustache. "I cannot forget that he is Milord Fallowfield, who owns a revenue of three-quarters of a million—francs, I mean—who can cover his wife with his family diamonds, allow her a hundred thousand—always francs—a year for her toilet—present her at your magnificent Court, and endow her splendidly after he shall have been carried to the tomb of his ancestors. Ventrebleu! How is it possible that a woman who—whatever the attractions of her profession—toils hardly for a precarious revenue—should resist all that?"

Uttering these latter words, as he did, standing under and looking towards the portrait, the Vicomte failed to perceive how strongly they affected Heartley, who, unable to contain his emotion, pretended to busy himself among his paints and brushes; for, in truth, the words echoed the very thoughts that were perpetually gnawing at his own heart, and causing his despondency to border on despair. They were, in short, the words of reason and experience, the expression of the principle which rules—and necessarily rules—with women in the trafficking artificial social condition to which we are bound; and though every man hopes, perhaps believes, that the particular woman on whom he has set his affections will prove an exception to the rule, yet he must always fear she may not. It was, probably, thus impressed that Heartley remarked, when, having mastered his emotion, he joined the Vicomte beneath the portrait, "You know women, but it is not given to us all to know the better sort of women—the exceptions to the rule!"

"Ha! ha! ha! Ami! Do you believe there are exceptions in this case?"

"I do."

"Then I do not. Assuming that a man's proposals to a woman are in accordance with her principles—and you know female principles vary *ad infinitum*!—croyez-moi all the rest is a mere question of price."

"A truly French idea, Vicomte!"

"Bah! We French are a logical people. The ideas which you English mangle confusedly we push to their logical conclusion—Voilà tout!"

After this, the Vicomte, his serenity restored through the hope, in which Heartley confirmed him, of possessing the much desired copy, entered into details of a technical character concerning the work of art in question, and in due course brought his visit to an end, promising to repeat it in a few days.

Heartley himself anticipated with a sort of doubtful satisfaction the visit to Marie necessitated by the promise he had given the Vicomte.

It was to the admiration for Miss Fenton, of the demonstrative Frenchman scarcely less irrepressible at the Pantechnic Theatre than we have seen him in Heartley's studio, that Claude Cotherstone owed a request, made to him, some three weeks after the Vicomte's visit to Heartley, by Lord Fallowfield for his interference in an affair which he (Claude) termed a "shindy among those theatre people."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CLAUDE COTHERSTONE was upon a footing with Miss Fenton which might have gained him access to her either at her private residence or at the theatre; he, however, thought fit, on his return from Fallowfield Court, whither he had gone on the receipt of Lord Fallowfield's letter, to see, not the actress herself, but the actress's manager.

Closeted with Mr. Gainsborough, he levelled his single glass at him, and thus entered *in medias res*:—"I want to have—Aw—Aw—a few words with you—Aw—Aw—about Miss Fenton. I've been staying at Fallowfield Court with the

Earl; I've dined with the Vicomte de Foix; I've seen Mr. Heartley"—noting off each of the three names in question with his forefinger, as being the three heads of his coming discourse—"which is as much as to say that I—Aw—Aw—I'm *au fait* of the sort of triangular rivalry Miss Fenton has occasioned. Now, my dear Sir, just be good enough to tell me—speaking in your own interests, and to a man who—Aw—Aw—has no interest whatever in the affair, beyond wishing to prevent his friends from—Aw—Aw—making greater asses of themselves than they have already done—what, in your opinion, are the proper steps to be taken with that object."

Mr. Gainsborough laughed, as he replied, "If you want an honest answer, don't mix up my opinion with my interests. My interests are best served by allowing your friends to—to—I can't take the liberty with their names which you have taken. The public, who would come in numbers to see Miss Fenton act, are coming positively in crowds to see the object of rivalry between an English and a French nobleman. If you, by bringing about an explanation, put an end to that rivalry, you immediately reduce my houses from crowds to numbers. You see, don't you, Mr. Cotherstone?"

"Nothing can be plainer. Do me the favour to reply—Aw—Aw—as Mr. Gainsborough, not as Mr. Manager."

"Well, then, to begin—I'm by no means certain that you will be rendering Miss Fenton—professionally speaking—a service, by bringing about what our writers call a *dénouement*. Doesn't it occur to you that her fame is augmented by the agitation of such questions as these—which you may read in the theatrical weeklies?—'Are the boards of the Pantechnic destined to form a ladder for the ascent of another "Lady Teazle" into the Peerage?'—or—'Will the choice of the Star of the Pantechnic fall upon the English or the French coronet?'—and so on."

"But you—Aw—Aw—thus assume that Miss Fenton places professional above social rank."

"I do. I think such is the case with her."

"Vanity has not then—Aw—Aw—much sway over her?"

"Not the ordinary vanity of women. This I can tell you for a certain fact. When she heard about the Vicomte having challenged the Earl, she sent for the Vicomte, and told him that if the duel came off, and he was not killed, she

would refuse ever to see him again ; that if anything more than another could cause her to accept Lord Fallowfield, it would be the persistence in that duel."

"Quite—Aw—Aw—dramatic, eh, Gainsborough? Floorer for the little Frenchman, though. Which of the two do you think she prefers?"

"The Vicomte."

"So do I—and I'll tell you why. She can't keep Fallowfield at bay so easily as she can de Foix. Fallowfield is such a dull blockhead that he defeats her woman's artifices by sheer weight and bulk—as a bull smashes a high fence which would stop a lighter and more active animal. To my mind she shows infinite cleverness in having held him dangling on as long as she has."

Claude had dropped his glass, unscrewed his cheek, and thrown aside his ordinary affectation. The manager thought him a different man, and replied, "The dangling you talk of is all the Earl's own doing. He simply won't be refused. He's not so dull as to be ignorant of his great social advantages; and he can't believe that it is in woman, gentle or simple, to finally reject those advantages."

"Then you must believe she would be glad if his pretensions were extinguished?"

"I'm sure she would—as a woman."

"And as an actress?"

"She has too much of the true artist in her to consult her interests in such details as might prevail with a less artistic woman. Pray bear in mind the success—unparalleled in our time—which Miss Fenton has had. I have some little knowledge both of the theatre of my own day and of its traditions in the past. I look upon Miss Fenton as an actress who, with additional experience, is capable of equalling such celebrities as Miss Farren, Mrs. Alington, and Mrs. Nisbett, in 'Lady Teazle.' She has the beauty and grand air of the first, the enchanting grace and vivacity of the second, the archness and the silvery voice of the last."

"Great praises, Mr. Gainsborough! Tell me now—Do you believe she really favours this good little fellow de Foix?"

"Yes, as a friend and a countryman—no more. I much doubt whether she thinks seriously of Heartley, the painter; but if of anybody, she does of him; and I'll tell you why. You see she might marry him, and not quit the stage."

"At least, Gainsborough, if that's her view, it's taken from a business point."

"There's no passion, Sir, like that of successful artists for their art."

"Upon my word, Gainsborough, I think I can't do better than by leaving the lot of them to their own devices. Fallowfield is not worth wasting breath upon. The Vicomte, Frenchman-like, glories in the excitement of the thing, is proud of being talked about, and delighted to place himself *en evidence*. I don't see the least reason for troubling Miss Fenton with my advice. I'm glad I came to see you. Thanks for your plain speaking. Keep your 'crowds,' and prosper! By the way"—here Claude resumed his glass and his screw—"talking of artists—have you seen or heard anything lately of our friend Aylesmere?"

"No. He never comes near us now. Ah! Sir—That young man would have made a great actor. He possesses every requisite for it. Of course, one ought not to lament for him—fortunate as he has been elsewhere; but one must, for the sake of the profession."

"You'd be glad to have him back, eh?"

"Glad, indeed!"

"Perhaps to play—Aw—Aw—with Miss Fenton?"

"Aye, they would play well up to one another; you know—or perhaps you may not know—that he it was who first told her she had a vocation for the stage. He did it on the recommendation of Screesman, then in management, now the agent."

"I never heard that, but I'm not surprised. I know they were—Aw—Aw—very intimate once upon a time. I say, Gainsborough! It would be strange—wouldn't it?—if Aylesmere were to return to the stage, and to—to—play with Miss Fenton!"

"You may be assured, Mr. Cotherstone, I should not regret it. But I'm afraid it's very unlikely."

"Well, Gainsborough, so many unlikely things do happen!"

"I know him well enough to feel certain that he's not cut out for an idle life—I mean a mentally idle life."

"Yes, he may—Aw—Aw—tire of idleness—and—Aw—Aw—of other things that I could mention."

"I sincerely wish he would, Sir. Though, of course, you'll ask me what Society will say to him?"

“Rather—Aw—Aw—a drop out of his own class if he did return to the stage.”

“Not such a very great drop, Sir.”

“Well, Gainsborough, you’re too much—Aw—Aw—of a gentleman yourself to take it as personal, if I say there are—Aw—Aw—some devilish queer people in your profession.”

“Neither will you,” replied the manager, who had detected a covered sneer in Claude’s manner, “if I say there are queer people in every profession—though probably the queerest of any may be found among those of no profession at all; and I can tell you, Sir, my experience of the theatrical profession teaches me that when young men of Mr. Aylesmere’s antecedents and tastes, from choice or necessity, do take to it, they seldom—if ever—descend to the level you speak of, while the inevitable tendency of their example is to refine and elevate the general tone of the profession.”

Claude comprehended the rebuke thus quietly administered; but he had no wish to be on any other than good terms with the manager of the Pantechnic, so, as he rose to go he shook him cordially by the hand, merely repeating that he should “leave the lot of them to their own devices.”

This resolution he may or he may not have intended to carry out to the letter; at all events, he made his appearance the following afternoon, at No. — Belgrave-square, in time to find Mrs. Leadstone and Juliana preparing to start for Lentworth, whither the Squire and Frank had preceded them by two days.

In this separation of the family forces he read the first results of his manœuvres, and rejoiced accordingly.

“Deserted by your natural and lawful guardians, ladies!” he exclaimed pityingly.

Mrs. Leadstone observed with acerbity that such desertion was nothing new now.

Claude shook his head in solemn silence, as he pressed each lady’s hand, the mother’s gently, the daughter’s ardently only, however, to find that the elder lady returned his pressure far more warmly than the younger.

The departure for Lentworth, and not for the sea-side, had been resolved upon, simply because nobody appearing to care much about the matter Mrs. Leadstone had snatched an easy victory in the direction which promised most for her own success.

"When will you come and see us, Mr. Cotherstone?" this lady asked.

"Immediately after Goodwood, my dear Mrs. Leadstone."

"Pray do! I asked the Vicomte de Foix. He was *au désespoir* at the necessity for declining."

"Not he! Why, ladies, he is in the seventh heaven of happiness. Ha! ha! ha!"

Juliana asked Claude what he was laughing at.

"I tell you, Mrs. Aylesmere, the Vicomte won't leave London—excepting for the Goodwood week—you know his mania for le sport!—till the Pantechnic theatre is closed for the season. You look surprised. Surely you must have heard the story about Miss Fenton?"

"Miss Fenton! What of her?" from both ladies.

"I forgot—you take no interest in theatrical gossip—and unless Frank has told you——"

"Frank!" Mrs. Leadstone thrust in. "I do sincerely hope he's not flying in the face of Society and getting back into the slough we extricated him from. But pray what may this particular piece of theatrical gossip be which you associate with the Vicomte's name?"

Thus invited, Claude proceeded to give a version of the Pantechnic story especially arranged to suit his own objects, and wherein the character of Miss Fenton was far from tenderly treated, without stating a single fact which might be laid hold of as an aspersion. His "line" was to make her appear at once a sorceress, the influence of whose charms few men could resist, and a woman little troubled with scruples as to the mode of attaining any end she might propose to herself; besides generally deepening the disfavour in which the stage and its surroundings were held by his two hearers.

It will suffice to state, without entering into details, that he so far succeeded in his endeavours as to send mother and daughter off to the railway in the exact state of mind suitable to his views.

Goodwood passed. Claude Cotherstone, again a winner of some thousands, appeared at Lentworth Hall according to promise; he was somewhat vexed at finding there Marcus Aubrey and Lumley Berrington, the latter having brought over the former, who was staying at Westwood, in the

absence of young old Miles on a gout-killing expedition.

Claude, however, lost no time in utilizing the presence of these two clubbists, by bringing the story of Miss Fenton and her two noble admirers on the tapis during dinner. Miss Fenton was, of course, handled as an actress, and no more. Frank alone spoke boldly in her favour. He was ignorant of the real facts of the case, though of course he had heard the stories related in and about the theatre, and he refused to believe that Miss Fenton would, under any circumstances, act with impropriety. As to her marrying either of the men in question, why should she not? She liked him well enough? He imported into his conversation sufficient warmth to justify Claude Cotherstone in whispering to Juliana, "Did not I tell you, in the church at Merton, Marie Duhamel would never want a champion for Frank's lifetime?"

A little later Claude obtained some spontaneous aid from Lumley, who, sitting on the other side of Mrs. Ayle, referred to Miss Fenton's antecedents. Remembered, he had seen her at Lentworth as Mademoiselle Duhamel, a delightful pianiste—handsome person—friend of Aylesmere. Of course, Mrs. Aylesmere felt interested in her success. Couldn't fancy a man of Fallowfield's position marrying in that class. But fellows did do such very strange things under the influence of woman's charms; and Fallowfield, though a thoroughly good fellow, was sometimes a tremendous idiot. As for little de Foix, he was a Frenchman—he knew better. Would rave and tear what he had left on his head for a woman—talk for her—defy her—fight for her—do the most maniacal things—but never marry her. Oh! No middle-aged Frenchman ever committed matrimony unless with a girl just out of a convent, or a *veuve* with a prodigious lot of money. At this point a certain quivering in his hearer's well-known lips, and a flashing in her beautiful eyes telling him that his subject was objectionable, he hastened to change it.

Claude had overheard the whole of Lumley's conversation, and shortly took occasion to whisper pityingly in Juliana's ear, "What a knack some people have of pursuing unsavoury subjects!"

"Oh, don't imagine I trouble myself much about Miss Fenton!" Juliana replied, with some asperity.

"I'm sincerely glad to hear it," Claude said; "for I fear you have more—much more—to hear about her." And by a glance in Frank's direction he contrived to give exactly the meaning he intended to his words.

The weather was hot, even for the season, and the evenings were favourable for after-dinner strolling. Claude—who, whenever bent on "business," left the table early, in order not to risk the effects of the Squire's excellent port wine—was at hand to single out Mrs. Aylesmere, and lead her into the most retired part of the garden. In truth she was not unwilling to be thus singled out. Before they had been many minutes together she said, with a visible effort, "Mr. Cotherstone, I am about to put your friendship to a test. I cannot endure this uncertainty about Frank and Miss—I mean Marie. Tell me, I implore you! Was there ever anything more than a—a common friendship between them?"

"My dear Mrs. Aylesmere, you are putting me in a terrible position—I am your husband's friend no less than your's. How can you ask me such a question? Even if I knew that your worst suspicions were justly founded, could I confirm them? Woe to the man who furnishes the wife with weapons against the husband!"

"Enough, Mr. Cotherstone—I am answered!"

"But, Mrs. Aylesmere! Here me! You have no right to rush at conclusions in this way! What have I said?"

"You need say no more than you have said."

"Indeed, Mrs. Aylesmere, I have not uttered a word from which you have a right to infer——"

"If you please, we will drop the subject."

"Of course we will, if you wish it. But I protest against your drawing the inferences you seem disposed to draw; and I pray you to bear in mind that you will not be justified in quoting me on this very delicate subject."

"Don't fear—I shall say nothing on the subject to anybody."

"I hope, my dear Mrs. Aylesmere, you'll do better still—think no more about this very absurd business."

"Absurd, Mr. Cotherstone! Absurd, when the happiness of two lives hangs upon it!"

"Pray don't treat the subject so seriously. No woman is justified in enquiring into her husband's past."

"What!—not when she has been led to believe that there never was any—any *past* of the nature you allude to?—When such belief is the foundation whereon she has erected the fabric of her love?"

"It's a real misfortune for a woman to have your sentimental way of looking at life. Now, if you would just throw off one of your cherished illusions, and take a practical view—a common-place view, if you please—of the married state, how much better it would be for you! Frank is a charming fellow—a clever fellow—anything and everything a woman can wish for in a husband. But Frank is getting on for thirty years of age—a little over half a man's life, as men live now-a-days. You had not even heard his name two years and a half ago. You know nothing—you are not expected to know anything—of his doings at that distance of time, except that he was a beggared gentleman, acting professionally somewhere in the North of England. Of course there were actresses in the same company with him—not Miss Fenton! Oh, don't suppose I'm alluding to Miss Fenton, and build a romance of your own on that! But ladies there undoubtedly were. We need not infer that as a matter of course stage heroes make serious love to stage heroines. Probably rather the reverse—many are so little the heroine in private life. Forty years old—no end of paint—a lot of children! Still, it's an incident quite within the bounds of possibility. I dare say if you had put my friend Frank through a sharp cross-examination on this point, you'd not have got much out of him; and even if you had—why, you know, you were in love with him yourself, and he might easily have so presented his case that you would have set a greater value on his admiration by reason of those very amourettes of by-gone days. But here come Mrs. Leadstone and Aubrey. You must not let them see you agitated. I'm really very sorry you have drawn me into this homily on the practicalities of married life, by your downright question about Frank and Miss Fenton."

"They won't see me at all. I'm going up to my own room. I'm unfit for society—unfit for——"

"For life, as it is, Miss Aylesmere!" Claude said, as she

turned abruptly down a narrow cross path, leading to the house. "You are indeed to be pitied!"

"I don't want anybody's pity!" she gasped out, for she was nearly choking with agitation. "I chose my own fate—whatever it is to be!" And with her light muslin dress flying on the night breeze, and dragging against the borders, she fled away, wringing her hands—a sight to move the stoniest heart to pity. But she moved not Claude Cotherstone. Her condition was all his doing—his deliberate doing. Observe how he had craftily piled insinuation on insinuation against Frank, uttering the while no single word out of which a direct charge could be wrested—with what fiendish art he had made the question concerning Marie a stepping-stone to those insinuations; and now, lest the origin of the discourse should be forgotten in the discourse itself, he had, at the last, returned to it by his allusion to Juliana's "downright question about Frank and Miss Fenton."

Juliana's unwontedly early departure excited considerable surprise. Claude affected entire ignorance on the subject. Frank went up-stairs to her, and returned, saying she was very tired, and would have a cup of tea in her room. Here-upon Mrs. Leadstone, desiring the footman to accompany her with the tea, herself went up. As she did not again make her appearance in the drawing-room, the gentlemen sat down to whist, and got through their evening as well as they might—Claude Cotherstone, almost as a matter of course, rising a winner.

Mrs. Leadstone's conversation with her daughter lasted far into the night; still further that which Cotherstone and Frank held in the dressing-room of the former.

The next morning Frank, who had been stirring from an early hour, did not appear at the breakfast table. Juliana said he had started for London by the first train, intending to return in time for dinner. He had "a little business," he had told her, "with his lawyer."

Mrs. Leadstone pursed up her mouth, and pursued the subject no further.

Claude affected surprise, though it was by himself that this visit in legal quarters had been planned and proposed. He regretted, however, to find that one result of his homily to Mrs. Aylesmere was to make her avoid rather than seek

his society. He should have reflected that thanks are scantily accorded to those who let in an unpleasant light upon matters hitherto obscure. He was careful to go himself, and alone to meet Frank at the station, whence they drove home slowly together.

"Well," Frank said, "I had a long interview with Mr. E——."

Mr. E—— was the London agent of Small and Brickwood, the Middleford solicitors, who had represented Frank in the drawing up of the marriage settlement.

"What's the result, Frank?"

"He went carefully through the settlement. It appears that five hundred a year is settled upon Juliana, and five hundred upon me, for our own proper and personal use."

"A thousand together. Rather a come down! But people do manage to rub on with it."

"Could you, Claude?"

"I've no notion. I never tried. Don't suppose you've ever done it as a bachelor—though you might now as a married man."

"I've no intention of trying."

"You think you can get another thousand or two out of the governor?"

"The liberal old fellow would not require much asking; but I won't take a penny. Catch me laying myself open to the sneers of Mrs. Leadstone, who never loses a chance of having a fling at me on the score of my poverty! No, Claude, when we leave the Leadstones, I mean to return—for a time at least—to the stage."

"So then, you really have decided to leave them?"

"Certainly—that is, I myself have—but——"

"Your wife—one can easily understand her hesitation—That fatal influence of her mother over her!"

"We shall see, Claude. I mean to bring the matter to a point with Juliana this very night."

"Tread cautiously on that ground, Frank. Whatever your wife's devotion to you, her mother is capable of drawing such a picture of the life she'll have to lead with you, away from these splendours and luxuries, that she may raise an opposition which even you will be unable to cope with. I suppose you saw some of the theatre folks?"

"Screesman—no one else. He undertakes to get me a

new start under every possible advantage—will work the press—the provinces—the profession—in short, go in for me heart and soul.”

“You haven’t been so light-hearted for months past. Really, Frank, it does appear as if you were wasting your life in this *dolce far niente* existence. I begin to think you’re right. By the bye, anything new about la belle Fenton and her admirers?”

“I saw nobody likely to enlighten me. Not that I care much. My decided belief is that she’ll end by going to church *tout bourgeoisie* with her constant admirer, that fine fellow Heartley.”

“Humph! Do you really think so? And she might be a countess! By Jove, the woman’s a paragon! But I say, Frank, just let me give you a caution. You know I keep my eyes pretty wide open. Now that the stage is likely to be discussed between your wife and yourself, avoid mentioning Miss Fenton.”

“Nonsense! My wife is——”

“Like all wives, liable to be unreasonably jealous of her husband’s past. You see you’ve thought fit to be close with her about Marie Duhamel—so, at least, I suspect,—and, of course, you’ve your reasons for it! Well, my good friend, continue the silent system on the subject of Miss Fenton!”

Frank made no reply, Claude’s artfully worded suggestion being sufficiently based on truth to trouble his conscience, and render him alive to the prudence of acting upon his wily counsellor’s advice. This the wily counsellor quite understood, and naturally laughed within himself thereat.

“It’s twenty to one on me!” was the sporting formula wherein his thoughts found expression.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THAT evening Frank’s whole demeanour bore out Claude’s assertion that he had “not been so light-hearted for months past.”

Claude, versed in female character, doubted whether this might not so attract the wife towards the husband as to aid the latter in their forthcoming matrimonial conference. Against such contingency he thought it advisable to play a high card.

“My dear Mrs. Leadstone”—thus in mournful and pitying accents he addressed that matron, having drawn her into the garden, after dinner—“it really is exceedingly hard upon you, after all you have suffered in this, I may say, unnatural family contest”—here, pausing suddenly, and assuming an air of mystery—“of course, I rely upon your observing the strictest secrecy. Perhaps, indeed, it would be more prudent not to say what I’m going to say, but my friendship for you and your’s impels me to do it.”

“Bless me, Mr. Cotherstone! What is it you’ve heard? Don’t—don’t keep me in this agonizing suspense!” cried Mrs. Leadstone, thus wound up to the necessary pitch of curiosity.

“Hush! Isn’t that Frank’s voice?”

“No! no! Go on!”

“Well, then, my dear Madam, I’m sorry to tell you that Frank has once again”—here he smiled darkly—“got the better of you—overthrown your plans.”

“Nonsense! Nonsense!”

“Not nonsense at all. Frank means to leave you. Frank’s wife will support Frank!”

Mrs. Leadstone screamed—tottered—and Claude had made himself up for catching her in his arms, when approaching footsteps attracted the hearing of one and the other.

“Calm yourself,” Claude said. “Frank is coming.”

“What’s the matter there?” Frank called out, as he rapidly drew near.

“Nothing,” Mrs. Leadstone replied quite collectedly, drawing herself up erect.

“But I heard somebody scream. Was it you?”

“Yes. I thought I had trodden on a toad—you know my horror of toads—Faugh! Is that Juliana behind you?”

Juliana answered, “Yes, I came on to——”

“Help me. Thanks, darling.” Then in a whisper to Claude—“Take him away. Leave her with me!”

Juliana was forthwith pounced upon and led away by her mother, Frank remaining with Claude.

No traces of the conversation held by the mother and daughter were visible on the mother’s countenance when the party assembled at tea, for she was artificial even to hypocrisy. Juliana, on the contrary, was little practised in the

concealment of her feelings, and her eyes bore traces of recent tears.

Frank approached her, and addressed her soothingly, utterly ignorant of the cause of her trouble. He perceived, however, that he was likely to make bad worse, for she drew back from him, her throat swelling as if with a hardly repressed fresh burst of sorrow.

The three visitors looked enquiringly at each other.

Mr. Leadstone having somewhat abruptly asked his daughter if she would not give them some music, Mrs. Leadstone sharply desired him not to ask for music—he must surely see Juliana was not quite well—in fact, it was her (Mrs. Leadstone's) opinion that the sooner she (Juliana) went to bed the better. But Mrs. Leadstone had at times an air as if considering her darling girl still a child, which her said darling girl did not always relish. This manner the domineering lady thought fit to adopt on the present occasion, and Juliana, in the overwrought state of her nerves, took it amiss.

"I'm not going to bed," she exclaimed, starting up, "I'm going to play!"

Frank hastened to open the piano, and place the music stool, asking what she would play.

"Anything—the first that comes," she answered, without looking at him.

He placed a pile of music on the piano. The first piece that met her eye was "The Roses Waltzes."

"Not that!—not that!" she whispered, flinging it away almost with violence.

"What!—not our favourite Roses?" Frank asked softly and tenderly.

Without answering, she sat down and flew off at once into a succession of wild harmonies which gradually led her up to a composition filled with a suave and tender melancholy—one of Mendelssohn's "songs without words." During her performance of this, a gentler mood seemed insensibly to steal over, and possess her. Frank the while anxiously observed her, himself no less anxiously watched, both by Mrs. Leadstone frowning outwardly, and by Claude Cotherstone laughing inwardly.

To Mr. Leadstone's question, at night, "What was the

matter with Juliana this evening?" Mrs Leadstone replied, "Matter enough, as you'll find out before long. A pretty business this marriage of your making is likely to turn out!"

Unable to extract a single word in explanation of this enigmatical response, the Squire was forced to turn to his pillow, attributing to his wife one of those unaccountable mental conditions not uncommon with her, wherein she was wont to hit blindly around her, conjuring up remote for her onslaught, when they failed to arise naturally.

Frank, always conscious of his mother-in-law's evil influence over his wife, had twice during the evening encountered the former lady's frowns; whereupon, thinking it desirable to keep Juliana away from her, he pleaded fatigue after his journey to excuse himself from the whist table, and retired very shortly after the ladies. His early arrival upstairs, duly reported by the prying Luttrell, effectually prevented the otherwise inevitable maternal invasion of Juliana's dressing room. The consequence was that he found Juliana—although not unprepared for what was to follow—yet better disposed towards him than she would have been had she come freshly moulded by her mother's moral manipulations. Her affection for Frank was so genuine, the bent of her mind towards him was so thoroughly wife-like, that to any but the very greatest provocation—real or imaginary—she was nearly inaccessible.

Now what was the ground of provocation conjured up against her good, loving, warm-hearted, though perhaps too easy-going Frank, between the artful insinuations of Claude Cotherstone, working to his own wicked ends, and the willing interpretations thereof by Mrs. Leadstone, prejudiced and malicious, though, in the present instance, blindly working as the instrument of those ends?

It consisted of the following charge. Frank had loved Marie Duhamel prior to his marriage with Juliana. Frank's announced intention to leave his wife's family, and to resume his profession, arose out of his desire to return to his former relations with Marie Duhamel!

Imagine the effect of such a charge—supposing it to be in any way substantiated—upon the mind of such a woman as Juliana!

Without recapitulating the various stages through which

—her own vivid imagination and impetuous temperament aiding—she had been wrought up to the desired pitch, or how far the scheme against her peace of mind had been negatively aided by Frank's too careful and really needless avoidance of all allusion to Marie, let it suffice to state that Juliana had now accepted the aforesaid baseless fabrication as a proven fact; furthermore, that she had given her word to her mother—of course, at Claude's secret instigation—not, for the present, to inform Frank of his alleged offence, under any circumstances whatever. That she should have allowed so preposterous a promise to be extorted from her, proved the unpractical turn of her mind, and her incapacity to deal, unaided, with difficult situations; but it admirably suited the purposes of the traitor at the bottom of the nefarious plot, by diminishing the chances of a premature *éclaircissement* between the husband and the wife.

"My love," Frank began, after a few words of endearment,—not too graciously received—"Did you observe the expression of your mother's countenance as she looked at me to night?"

"Not particularly, Frank; but I suppose it was about the same as usual. You can't deny that you take little pains to conciliate her."

"My dear, I've long given that up as hopeless."

"Not a pleasant prospect, since you know we *must* live together."

"Must! That is the question—as my old friend Hamlet says."

"Hamlet! Psha! Theatres again!"

"My darling Juliana!" For she had spoken with a petulance quite new to her.

"Well, Frank, I confess I don't like to find your thoughts always bent in that direction."

"In what direction?"

"The stage."

"My sweet wife, you may rest assured that if my thoughts do turn towards the stage, they are sent in that direction by the force of circumstances."

"The force of circumstances over which you have no control, Frank?"

"What do you mean, Juliana?"

But Juliana was silent from the instinctive dread lest her

answer to this question should lead her upon ground she had promised to avoid.

“Juliana,” Frank resumed, gently placing her on the sofa, and seating himself by her, “let us both be calm. What I have to say is very important.”

“Indeed, Frank!—How should I know you had anything so very important to say?”—Herein there was a *soupçon* of the maternal hypocrisy.—“Well, what is it?—I’m really very tired. You must have seen I was not well to-night.”

“I did, dear. Some scene with your mother, eh?”

“Nothing of the sort. Always my mother! Come, what have you to say?”

“Your nerves seem in an irritable state to-night. Perhaps we had better defer our conversation till to-morrow.”

“And so give me the prospect of something unpleasant for my night’s thoughts. Thank you. I’d rather hear you to-night.”

“You will hear, and answer me calmly?”

“As calmly as I can. All depends on what you have to say—to ask.”

Frank hesitated. He could not conceal from himself that in Juliana’s present mood, calm consideration of any subject, however trifling, was hardly to be hoped. But he knew her irritability rarely lasted long; while he believed implicitly in her love, and her high sense of duty, under appeal to her heart or her conscience.

He resolved to proceed. “Juliana,” he commenced, “before I tell your father the decision I have come to——”

“The decision?”

“Decision. For indeed I am very decided upon the point.”

“What point?”

“Little impatience! If you interrupt me at every word, how shall I ever come to an end? I am anxious to tell you to-night what I shall say to your father to-morrow.”

“Oh! My father! He’s too much disposed to see things with your eyes.”

“Yet, your father is not a man whose judgment is easily led astray.”

“Don’t you think, Frank”—with asperity—“my father sometimes speaks and acts rather for the sake of opposing my poor mother?”

“ Ha ! ha ! ha ! Good that, dear ! Your *poor* mother ! ”

“ Laugh at her, Frank ! But, if you please, don't expect her daughter to join you ! ”

The majestic manner in which these words were uttered at first made Frank laugh the more ; but suddenly his risible tendency was checked, as he thought of the novel sentiment embodied in them. For the first time since their marriage Juliana was actively taking part with her mother, instead of confining herself, as heretofore, to softening off that lady's acknowledged hostility against himself. At once the situation appeared to him serious, and requiring serious treatment.

“ I have hitherto endeavoured to laugh at your mother,” he said, pointedly, “ because otherwise I must have frowned at her, and frowning might have led to an open expression of my feelings. This could have had but one conclusion—our withdrawal from her house. You know how I have sought to avoid that for your sake, my wife!—my love ! You know, too, that my self-restraint, instead of being reciprocated, has been abused by your mother—Your father knows it—Claude Cotherstone knows it—Every servant in the house knows it!—There must be an end to all things. The end of this intolerable situation is at length come. My forbearance is exhausted. I declare to you, my darling Juliana, that life in this house has become unbearable to me. I am resolved to leave it ! I have seen our lawyer ; ascertained what are our means independently of any money that I may make by my own exertions. We have a thousand a year of our own. Upon that we must henceforth live—in our own house, after our own fashion, unfettered by Mrs. Leadstone's interference. To-morrow I announce this to your dear good father. He will, I know, acknowledge that I am acting rightly ; but he will take no active part in any discussion which may follow. I should not wish him to do so. I shall urge him to abstain from it. He is fatally obliged to live with Mrs. Leadstone. Why should he further embitter his lot by needless discussion ? You, my dearest, will be the chief sufferer. Your loving heart clings yet fondly—too fondly—to your mother. God forbid that I should reproach you for this ! A mother is always a mother to her child. I know yours loves you as much as it is in her

to love any creature besides herself. I have no right to condemn her. She acts according to the nature which has been given her. I can but pity her. Further than that, I feel that this perpetual contact with Mrs. Leadstone's irritating temper must be injurious to one of my darling's susceptible nervous organization, and may even end by affecting her own naturally fine temper. She shakes her head!—She does not fear such result! Well, I prefer not to risk it, so I'm going to take her to a home of her own, where she shall be sole mistress—none to control her—none to dispute her gentle sway. Her home will be small and unpretending—but a home, I trust, of happiness—of contentment—of love Eh? What says my dear one to the prospect?"

While so speaking, Frank had taken one of his wife's hands, stolen an arm round her waist, and drawn her upon his breast. What wonder then, that, as his moistened eyes looked down into hers, and his voice grew tender and more tender with his theme, her lips sought and clung to his—that she clasped him to her, and in a long loving kiss cast to the winds all thought alike of nascent jealousy, divided affection, meditated rebellion?

"Enough of the subject for to-night!" Frank said to himself. "Why should I press her too hardly?"

A firmer—or let us put it—a harder man would not thus have let his opportunity slip; but Frank's nature was of those which gladly avoid unpleasant tasks, even when convinced of their necessity. The effect produced by his abstention on Juliana's impressionable nature was expressed in the thought which thus presented itself to her mind. "Perhaps, after all, he's not so determined to take me away as he imagines. Oh, if I can but keep him here—to myself—all to myself!"

(To be continued.)

IV.

'Tis scarcely pleasing to be told
That you are *this*, with prefix "old."

MENA.

SOLUTION OF DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 9.

N umer O
O isea U
N in I

Light 3, "Nini," abbreviation of Eugénie.

Correct answers received from Shark, Lalla Rookh, Victor
You Go, Black Beetle, Albatross, Quite a Young Thing Too,
Alcestis, Benedictine. 8 correct and 48 incorrect. Total 56.

N
C
Allia
Quit
12 c

ACROSTIC AND MESOSTICH RULES.

I.—Each number of the *St. James's Magazine* will contain a Double Acrostic and a Mesostich.

II.—In *each* competition Three Annual Prizes, in money (1st prize twenty-five guineas, 2nd prize ten guineas, 3rd prize five guineas), will be awarded to the three most successful solvers.

III.—Special competitions will be held for guessing off ties (if any).

IV.—Prize-winners will be required to furnish their names and addresses for publication.

V.—The same solver may win prizes in both competitions.

VI.—Only *one* word can be accepted as the solution of each light.

VII.—Answers addressed to "The Acrostic Editor," 5, Friar Street, Ludgate Hill, E.C., must be posted in time to be received by the first post on the 10th of each month, or on the 11th, if the 10th falls on a Sunday.

VIII.—In accordance with the wishes of numerous Subscribers, the Acrostic and Mesostiches for March, June, September and December will be in French.



St. James's Magazine.

NOVEMBER, 1879.

HUBERT MAITLAND'S WRAITH.

A NOVEL.

By FELIX HOLLAND.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SOME OLD ACQUAINTANCES.



AT Claver's Hotel, in a sumptuous apartment, sits the old blind man we saw some weeks ago in the smoky tap-room of the Crown and Candle. The weather is mild, but he still wears the great military cloak wrapped closely round him, and every few minutes he shivers over the roaring fire. Here sits he the livelong day, cringing on the hearth, and staring round at the door with his old blind eyes, as if in a state of chronic expectation of visitors who never come. For since he has been here only one man has called, and that is the hale and shabby old man just creeping so swiftly up the stairs.

"Good e'en to ye," says the individual, striding past the footman who was ceremoniously engaged in an elaborate announcement of

"Mr. Kannyman."

"Be seated, sir," said the blind man, drawing himself generously back from the fire, as if he had no conception of anybody being in such a state as to render the adventitious heat indispensable.

"Nae, nae, I'm not a salamander," replied the Scotchman, seating himself as near the door as possible.

"No news?"

"Deil a word!"

"You have advertised in the foreign papers for this Mr. Vane—Fane—Alaric Fane?"

"Yes, all the advertisements are out;" and, taking a Paris newspaper from his pocket, Mr. Kannyman proceeded to read what sounded to his auditor something thus—"Armshear Alaric Fane deil under"—

"I beg pardon. You were saying something about the Deil, were you not?" asked the blind man, awaking from a reverie.

"Deil a word o' the Deil, sir; I was readin' the French advertisement. Ye ken the French tongue, sir, eh?"

"I did once, I suppose. You think my child is living?"

"Oh, the bonnie lassie's livin', nae dout. Dinna fash, sir, we shall find her yet."

He spoke very kindly; his blind companion seemed touched. After a minute's pause he said,

"I am an old man, very old and broken, but not by years, and I draw nigh to the grave. I cannot tell if I shall ever hear my darling's voice again, nor ask the forgiveness I need at her hands; and I have no other friend in all the world to care whether I live or die."

"Come, master, dinna say that. The bonnie lassie's father shall never be without a friend while I live. It isna much that I can do; but I'm varra sorry for ye."

Mr. Kannyman laid his great hand kindly on the old man's as he spoke. There was as much sympathy in his touch as in his voice.

The poor lonely old man seized it as a perishing man grasps the hand that is outstretched to save him.

After a while he released it, and his head sank down on his hands.

Mr. Kannyman rose, sighed, and glided out of the room. There was more kindness in the act than in the softest spoken adieux.

It was afternoon, evening, night, and still the old man sat huddled over the fire. Servants glided up and down the stairs, and their feet pattered past his door, men and women passed and he saw them, and to every step he turned his withered face and looked expectantly. At length, as the clock struck seven, a heavy step was heard on the stairs; step after step it

came slowly, wearily up; some one halted at the door, knocked, entered.

"Mr. Hubert?"

"I am he."

"And I am Alaric Fane," in tones almost as hollow and wretched.

The old man gave a low cry, in which joy and sorrow sadly commingled. It was such a sound as a drowning man might utter as he saw his child snatched from the waves where he must sink.

"My child!" he cried, "you bring me news of her?"

"I bring you news of her."

"What? Do not say she is dead—anything but that."

"She lives, and is well, and I—I hope—happy."

"Oh, bring me to her—let me see her—let me hear her! Oh, my darling—at last!"

"Yes, yes, you shall to-night, but give me time; I have travelled far, and am faint and weary. Will you let me rest an hour or two?"

"Forgive me, I am blind, but your voice should have told me that. Let me offer you some wine."

"Not a drop—I have drunk too much already."

"Have you dined?"

"Yes; that is—no, but I have no appetite, I only need rest."

"Then sit down, come nearer the fire—it is so cold. Now tell me what you know of—of her. Do not spare me. I have learned the worst. A villain led her from her duty—God's curse on him—and she is now what we will not name. Tell me all, if there is aught else to know; I will not call in question the nature of your relationship; I have learned that you were kind to her—that is enough. I know little of the ways of the world. You may have sinned against her and against yourself, but you were kind to her, and I bless you."

"God help me, I more need your pardon," groaned Alaric Fane.

"Well, I forgive you, I forgive all—but one."

"And him?"

"Listen," said the old man. "I am an old man—old ere my time—but I have strength enough to strike one stroke for her. To find my child, to save her, make her rich, and as

happy as I may, that is now only half my task. I will find him too—her betrayer—and then——”

“And then?”

“See!” whispered the old man, snatching something from his pocket that flashed as he waved it fiercely over his head.

“I will find him—she shall lead me to him—then let me feel my hand upon his throat, and I will avenge her—thus!”

“Give me your hand, old man—so. Strike! I am the man.”

The old man’s grip was on his throat—fierce and inexorable as the clutch of death, the bright blade glittered aloft, then there was a heavy fall upon the floor—but it was not Alaric Fane who fell.

There he lay, the grand old man, the long white hair half hiding as if in charity the poor scarred and blasted face, yet revealing enough of misery to break a heart that was not too indurated by vice to pity its victims. Hardly knowing what he did, the stalwart young man knelt over the poor withered face whose bitterest sorrow he had himself inflicted, and the old man was awakened to consciousness by the hot tears falling on his face.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE STORY OF HUBERT MAITLAND FROM HIS OWN POINT OF VIEW.

ALARIC lifted the poor old man gently to his seat, and stroked back the wild locks from his face.

“Who are you? You are not him, or you would not weep.”

“My father, forgive me,” cried Alaric; “I was young, and knew not what I did, and I have paid the penalty by years of misery bitter as your own. Had you slain me now it had been the greatest kindness you have power to render.”

The agony of the young man’s voice, his bitter tears, and the touch of his burning hand, swept away old Hubert’s wrath. A minute ago he would have taken his life, and now he grasped his hand in fervent sympathy. Oh, mighty is the power of kindred sorrow!

“Sit down, my son; I forgive you wholly. Forgive me; I

too have sinned; and my sin and my misery have made me mad. My life has been a strange one, and not happy; yet the fault was not all my own. I have secrets that for years have preyed upon my peace, and I thought to carry them with me to my grave. But my heart would be lighter if another shared the secret of its sin. May I tell it you?

"It was nearly thirty years ago, and I was young and full of hope. My youth had been studious and upright, and my manhood was strong and cheerful. I had no prospects in view, and I needed none; my only desire was leisure to enjoy my books, and that I had. I had no acquaintances, and only one friend, a little girl, a cousin I had watched grow up from a baby to a woman. She was very beautiful—a wild, thoughtless, merry girl, with black sparkling eyes and cheeks like roses, and a sweet voice that thrilled through me when she spoke like no other in the world. I loved the very ground she trod upon. But I had no hope that such a bright mirthful fairy would ever love a dull quiet man like me; and so I rested as contented as I might, and made myself happy by doing little kindnesses for her, telling her the stories she loved, and helping her in her search for flowers and ferns and birds' eggs, for she was a country girl, and loved all things wild and beautiful. One day I fell from a tree and lay a minute insensible at her feet, and when I opened my eyes she was looking down at me as she had never looked before, and I knew then that she loved me. Oh, how happy we were! Not the lark that wakes us from our blissful dreams had such a joyful heart as I. Gladly would I live over again the joyless years of my mis-spent life for one such another day as that.

"But I was poor, and her father despised me for my bookish ways. To prove my love, and conciliate his unjust displeasure, I agreed to go to India to prove my worth; for I was proud, and love had made me brave. After a year's toil I found myself no nearer fortune than before. Speculation was rife, and in a desperate hour I risked half my possessions in an apparently hopeless venture; against all expectations, it succeeded, and set me far on the road to fortune. I ventured again and again with various success, but in two years I found myself a rich man.

“Leaving others to manage the property I had acquired, I hastened away, the gladdest man that ever crossed the ocean homeward bound. It was a long voyage, as all lovers’ journeys are, and was lengthened by an accident that cost many their lives—but I was saved to worse fate. Home—the rustic little village that love had made my home, the old house where I hoped my home would henceforth be—I reached at last. It was evening, and every window was aglow with light, and the sound of music came forth to greet me as I panted up the hill. Yet my heart misgave me; it was not thus I had hoped to meet my darling. I needed no feast to-night, but such as I could gather from her lovelit eyes and welcoming lips. I entered unannounced; a form like an angel’s ~~fitted~~ ^{stood} before me; I threw my arms around her in a transport of ungovernable emotion, but another hand snatched her from my embrace and asserted the right I had come to claim. Someone had played me false; my Bessie, for whom I had toiled, for whom alone I lived, was the bride of another!

“I know not the rest, for my reason gave way under the calamity; and for several years I lived a living death, and my memory has kept no record of their misery; but when I next awoke to the comprehension of my fate, my hair was white as snow, and my strength and energy of manhood were gone for ever—only the capacity for suffering was left.

A yearning tormented me; I could not rest, I must see her once again—let her know that I yet lived, learn from her lips what my heart already knew, that she had not been false to me. I escaped from the madhouse where they had confined me. I travelled on foot, unresting day and night, over seventy miles of wet and dreary land, and I found her, oh, happy sorrow! in her grave.

“Henceforth my only pleasure was now and again to visit that sacred spot, where all her woes and half my own lie buried.

“One night—a dark tempestuous night—I was hastening, wet and footsore, to ease my heart by praying and weeping over her precious dust; a flash of blinding lightning dazzled and stunned me, and when I could see and know again I beheld the old house—the last house where she had dwelt, and which was still her children’s home—enveloped in

smoke and flame. The villagers were assembled in the road before it, and as I neared I heard a sound of terror and dismay. All faces were upturned in ghastly horror at a lofty window. As I stood unobserved on the borders of the crowd, I heard a man say that the children—her children—were there perishing, beyond their help. A sudden frenzy seized me. Life and death were nothing to me—I would save them, my lost love's children, or die with them. I ran round the house to where a giant tree lifted its withered arms above the roof. In a minute I was in its branches, and on the burning house. The flames were rolling over me in floods, but I pressed on through them all across the charred rafters that burnt through my shoes at every step. I swung down by the vine branches and the nails in the wall into the chamber. God who walketh in the fire had held back the flames, and the children were there—alive, but suffocating in the smoke. There was no time to think. I looked from the window and saw the earnest crowd below. It was my only chance; I threw the boy among them—they caught him—he was saved. I took up the other, a beautiful little girl, and by the fierce flame-light saw my dead Bessie's face imaged in her child's. I had only time to kiss her once, and as I kissed she clasped her little arms about my neck and clung to me, more in love than terror. An evil thought flashed in my maddened brain. Could I only steal this sweet girl, and cherish her for her mother's sake; her father could not love her more than he had wronged me, yet I had saved him his boy. Was not this my own—God's gift to me?

“I knew the house, every foot of it. A trap door led from the garret chamber to the roof. I was tall, the room was low. I leapt at it, gained it, and was again on the burning roof with my precious charge wrapped in my wet cloak. It was desperate work, but I gained the tree at last unseen, and soon was safe once more on the ground, and speeding away in the darkness.

“I had neither money nor friends in the neighbourhood, but I gained the shelter of an old unused barn, where I laid my child—yes, my child—down. She was sleeping.

“Some cows were lying in a meadow at hand. I left the little sleeper, and soon returned with my old tarpaulin hat,

turned inside out, and lined with leaves, filled with the fragrant milk. At morning, the child awoke—awoke smiling on me, and returned my kiss in fearless childish love. I solaced her for the loss of her brother, telling her that he was safe, and she should see him again by-and-bye. Then I taught her to drink the milk through a straw, and so we passed the day. As soon as night came on we resumed our journey, and by morning I and my precious charge were safe in a populous city. Thence, after a few days, we came to London, where lived a poor widow woman who had once been my lost Bessie's maid, and loved both her and me. I prevailed on her to adopt my little treasure, for the child needed a woman's care, and I was rough and unfitted to the task. The widow was poor, and I had nothing; for had I asserted my claim to the wealth I had left in India I should have been in danger of being recaptured, and sent back to the pauper madhouse whence I had escaped. I set myself to earn a livelihood, and soon my education found us means of support.

“My little Bessie soon forgot the old home. She was a strange, wayward child, and could never be brought to like her foster mother, but she loved me with a childish earnestness and passion that she could only have inherited from her mother. The happy years went by, and I grew young again in her love. But my sight had been injured by the fire, and began to fail me. I consulted a physician, and learned that there was no help; in two years I should be quite blind. Dreading the poverty that must ensue, not for my own sake, but for my darling's, I resolved to return to India and endeavour to recover the wealth that had for fifteen years remained unowned.

“I went, succeeded, and again, with a joyful heart, I left the horrid clime and set my face towards my happy little English home, and the dear young soul that was pining away in my absence, no longer a poor cottage child, methought, but a little lady now with fifty thousand pounds her own.

“But, alas! it was not to be. The delirious excitement consequent on my success and the feverish longing to see my darling again proved too much for my weakened system. I fell ill, my reason left me, and again I was consigned to the conscious miseries of a madhouse.

"I soon recovered, but it was years before I could be set free, and the letters I wrote, I suspect, were treated as a lunatic's vagaries and were never posted. Had they been, I know my darling would not have been silent. I tried to escape, but was recaptured, and consigned to a more strict captivity. So the dreary years went by, and my broken heart lived on in hopeless agony. I prayed for death, but it would not come. I sought it violently, but a warder discovered my intentions and preserved me to my despair.

"They gave me liberty at last, but, alas! too late. My soul was too withered to be glad, and not even the blessed sunshine and the free winds of heaven breathing on my head could bring my lost hope back again. My sight was lost, and I felt that I was old, very old and weary. My only thought was to hear my darling's voice again, to make her rich, and then to die—Enough!"

"Enough," echoed Alaric Fane; "it is not all too late; come, let us go."

CHAPTER XXXV.

MOSS MAKES AN APPOINTMENT.

AGAIN Abraham Moss sat in his office, with a pen in his hand and a sheet of notepaper before him, and at his elbow stood the woman whose beauty had driven him almost to despair.

"Write," said Pearl, "as I dictate; if you vary a syllable I rescind my promise."

Oh, she was bewitchingly beautiful to-night! The soft folds of her satin dress fell over her graceful limbs, and added to the charms they affected to conceal; her ripe bosom—that perfection of mobile symmetry—rose and fell, changing and blending its hundred curves of living beauty with every breath, like Æolian music translated into flesh; and her face—that wonderful face, that had driven men mad with love as they gazed on it—was more beautiful to-night than when a year ago she had gathered up from the stage a dozen bouquets which an enthusiastic audience had lavished at her feet, at the end of a stupid play which her beauty alone had carried

through a hundred nights. And she smiled too—smiled on Abraham Moss! Oh, Pearl, Pearl, that it should ever come to this! Oh! what would he not give to-night for a kiss of those ripe rosebud lips? He would have given thousands for that a month ago while they were curved in scorn; what now when the pearly teeth flashed in the sunshine of their dimpling smile?

“I will sign my death-warrant at your bidding,” he cried, clutching at the dainty hand at his side. She plucked it playfully away.

“No, not yet, she said; “remember our compact—you are not to touch me till I have the letter.”

“But what proof have I that you are not hoaxing me after all? Women have done such things before now,” said Mr. Moss suspiciously. He could not quite comprehend the sudden change. But he had hardly spoken the words ere he repented them, and muttered to himself consolingly the “*Varium et mutabile*.” Was not this wonderful creature a woman after all? And was not he Abraham Moss, the handsome, the captivating, the lady-killer, the successful gay Lothario of the milliners' shops? Why would not this proud beauty prove as frail as the rest, now that he had once got her within reach of his charms?

All this thought Mr. Moss in a second, almost before Pearl had time to toss back her scornful little head and reply, “You have pursued me sedulously enough to know whether or not I am a woman likely to break her word. I have told you that as soon as I have posted that letter I am yours—yours body and soul—till I die. Write.”

Moss dipped his pen, and, bending over the desk, wrote at her dictation:—“Charles Aldair, Esq. Dear Sir,—I have long felt that the repugnance Miss Aldair unfortunately evinces to me renders it impossible I could ever be happy with her. I beg, therefore, that you will release me from my engagement. I should have written this to Miss Aldair, but as you and my father made the match without her cognizance, I presume you can release me without her consent. Permit me to remark that any endeavour on your part to influence my father to coerce me into compliance with your wishes will be useless, as that gentleman has long been of opinion that my present

prospects and expectations warrant me in aspiring to a larger fortune than your daughter would bring me.—I am, dear Sir, yours truly,

ABRAHAM MOSS, Jun.”

“Gad, we are giving it him hot between us!” ejaculated the writer, as he sealed and directed the letter. “But I don’t care. You’re cheap at any price, my Pearl.” Again he attempted to take her hand, and again she repulsed him firmly—almost fiercely.

“Well, I will not put you out of temper, you lovely little tempter, or it may spoil the fun, eh? But promise me once more that you will not deceive me, my Pearl.”

“I have promised. Here is my latch-key; let yourself in noiselessly at nine o’clock, and come straight up to my room. You will find me waiting.”

She was about to seize the letter when Mr. Moss swept it from her. It fell in a heap of papers on the floor; he picked it up quickly, and held it playfully overhead.

“Now, darling, one kiss—only one in earnest of the others, and the letter is yours.” Then, seeing the dark eyes flashing again, he tossed the letter to her.

‘There, there, sweet, don’t be angry; take it, and welcome. Good bye; remember to-night at nine!’

“To-night at nine,” she echoed, with a shudder.

She touched his hand as she would have touched a toad, and fled.

When the door was closed, Mr. Moss threw himself into a chair and laughed loud and long.

“Ha! ha! sold, by all that’s sacred, sold! Ha! ha! It’s worth more than the money.”

He spurned the heap of papers at his feet, and lo! there lay the very letter he had written at his imperious visitor’s dictation. Pearl was at this moment depositing carefully in the letter-box at the corner a polite note from Mr. Moss to his future father-in-law announcing his willingness to comply with that gentleman’s wishes, and marry Emily Aldair that day week. “Ha, ha!” roared the descendant of patriarchal Jacob. “Sold again—to-night at nine! Oh, Pearl, Pearl, Pearl!”

CHAPTER XXXVI.

MOSS KEEPS HIS APPOINTMENT.

PUNCTUALLY as the clock struck nine Mr. Abraham Moss rounded the corner of—— Crescent. He was in high glee to-night. In order the better to show his sense of the pleasurable importance of the occasion, he had attired his handsome person in the most fashionable and striking costume of his comprehensive wardrobe. Moreover, he indulged in a show of jewellery worthy a duchess on a ball night. From his massive gold chain were suspended a great bunch of trinkets useful and ornamental, bestudded over with more gems than go to symbolize the walls of heaven. His left hand, in which he carried the delicately-mounted cane with the Onyx knob and the cream-colored glove, was one flame of diamonds, rubies, and sapphires, and on his ample bosom glittered an emerald so large that the initiated, jealous of its splendour, hinted splotic doubts as to the sincerity of its glaring rays. Altogether he had the appearance of one of the most remarkable men of his class, and he knew it.

No. 1, —— Crescent looked doubly dreary to-night by reason of the fog and the drizzling rain. But oh, thought Mr. Moss, what a treasure is within ! He stealthily inserted Pearl's latch-key in the dirty door, opened it, entered. There was no sound ; it might have been a tomb, so dark and silent was it all within.

“ If she should trap me here, and get that great bully Fane to thrash me ! Gad, it's like enough. That fellow is always insulting or fighting somebody. He would be an ugly customer in a narrow room. I've a good mind not to go up these dark stairs alone. But no ; she may be shamming, the pretty hypocrite ; but she is too much afraid of my letting old Hubert loose on her to dare offend me. And she may be infatuated with me after all. Gad, she would not be the first. Confound that beastly rain, it has taken all the stiffness out of my shirt front. And I believe there is a smut on my nose. Gad, it's prominent enough without that.”

Thus meditating, Mr. Moss glided up the stairs and stood at the door of Pearl's apartment. It was shut, but he saw through the keyhole that a light was burning within. He tapped the panel lightly with his cane; there was no response.

Again he knocked louder, but no answer.

"If she should be lurking behind the door with that murderous little weapon in her fist, waiting there, watching with those basilisk eyes of hers, ready to spring on me the moment I enter!"

He sickened with the fearful dread; his face turned white, his knees smote against each other; his heart beat loud and fast. No, this was childish; most likely she had hoaxed him after all, and flown, and he should find nothing within but a little sarcastic note pinned to the pillow. Again he knocked; the sound went echoing through the lonely house with a frightful clatter. Still no answer. Half mad with terror, passion, and chagrin, he bounded into the chamber, more like a desperate wild beast than a man.

Ha! delirium! there lay his beautiful victim, quietly sleeping on the bed. Her face was turned away, but that voluptuous form, the graceful limbs, the rich tresses curling over the swelling bosom, and rippling down till they reposed in the hollow of her waist—that dainty delicate waist! He crept round to the other side; the light was streaming brightly on her face, but that face was white as the pillow on which it lay, and—oh! horror!—the great black eyes were wide open on him, with a wild, vacant stare, more blasting than the fiercest fire that ever flashed from them in the moment of their direst wrath. A minute he stood before the terrible face—a minute, and it seemed an age, then with a violent effort, as of one escaping from a nightmare, he wrenched his gaze away and ran from the room.

He paused on the landing and listened. There was no sound. "Gad," he whispered, "if they should find me here. They could not say I killed her, and yet ——"

And yet there was murder in his looks and murder in his stealthy, trembling hand. And when once safe out in the dull, dreary street, he fancied every moan of the wind, every rumble of a distant vehicle, every hasty step, cried "murder" at his heels.

Hardly was he out of sight when Alaric Fane, with old blind Hubert leaning on his arm, halted at Mrs. Ogle's door. After much knocking and ringing, that virtuous dame appeared in the passage, and in answer to inquiries said the lady in question might be at home or she might not, but they could see for themselves by going up to the top back. Thither they hurried. The door was open. Alaric knocked, and, receiving no answer, peeped in, entered. "Awake, Pearl, awake; it is I, and here is Mr. Hubert come home."

Alas! nevermore in this world will she awake to welcome them. The strong, passionate heart that has beat with love, and jealousy, and hope, and despair, lay still at last, and the deep earnest eyes that were wont to greet him with a smile looked on his terror-struck face as blindly as Hubert's own; the beautiful lips that he had kissed are parted as if to greet him, but they only speak the silent language of the dead.

Dead—yes, dead, with wrongs all unuttered and forgiveness all unspoken. And the fond old man may kneel at her side and pass his trembling hands over the beautiful face and smother it with tears which she will not return. And he, the man she had loved, perhaps died loving so unwisely and so well, may stand by with bowed head and clasped hands and downcast, haggard eyes that will not, cannot weep, gazing on all that once was life, and love, and beauty, and now is only this! Have the just heavens no thunderbolt for such as he?

Peace, vengeful mortals! Heaven's lightnings were but mercy in disguise. It is not death, nor yet the bigot's spiteful hell, can punish such as he. But the unspoken reproach of those dead eyes is kindling a hell within his heart, and never more shall peace or blessed rest be his.

(To be continued.)





GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO.

II.—HIS ACCOUNT OF THE PLAGUE OF FLORENCE.

WHEN, in that spirit of discontent which Placcus has so cleverly caricatured, and which, indeed, is quite as good a *differentia* or distinguishing characteristic of man as his reasoning faculty, or his want of feathers, we glorify the past, and descant, with more or less eloquence and ignorance, on the good fortune of our forefathers in living when they did, we are apt to draw magnificent conclusions from very slender premises. Distance here, as elsewhere, "lends enchantment to the view;" and we find ourselves not only waxing fervid in the praise of what we really can know nothing about, but also ignoring, in the contemplation of a few questionable *pros*, the host of very decided *cons* which go to make up the "good old times." But in our calmer and more contented moments we must in common justice admit that in some few particulars at least, we are a little ahead of our ancestors. Take, for example, the comparative state of things nowadays, of life and property; set the present administration of justice side by side with that of even the last century; compare the utter disregard of the first principles (as we consider them) of Hygiene, as still illustrated by most European cities, with the sanitary arrangements of the modern world. Since the cultivation of that very useful and interesting branch of literature, to wit, statistics, we are able to make the last comparison to prove beyond dispute our superiority. Those periodical visitations of plague and pestilence in whatever shape or another are now, indeed, things of the past, and the various accounts of them that have come down to us illustrate only too vividly the horrors of the evil so long stamped out.

There seems to be a horrible fascination about Placcus even about descriptions of them. A graphic writer fi



them abundant scope for his pen, and hence the painfully detailed accounts which Thucydides, Defoe, Manzoni, and others, have bequeathed to us. It is, however, with Boccaccio's description of the Plague in Florence [A.D. 1348] that we now propose to concern ourselves. It is a masterpiece of its kind, and proves beyond dispute the versatility of a writer who could pass on without an effort from its ghastly incidents to the funny quips of the Decameron. Lose, of course, it must by translation ; yet even in an English dress it cannot but retain some measure of its vivid imagery and solemn picturesqueness :—

“The years since the Incarnation of the Son of God—that seed which has borne so rich a harvest—had already numbered thirteen hundred and forty and eight, when in the noble city of Florence, fairer than all in Italy beside, appeared that mortal pestilence, which, whether due to the influences of the heavenly bodies or to our own misdeeds, was sent among us by the just anger of God for our chastisement. Some years ere this it had begun to run its course in Eastern lands, sweeping them of countless multitudes, and then, pursuing its career from place to place, it extended its horrors in the direction of the West. Despite the precaution of human foresight, which caused the city to be cleansed of many impurities under the eye of special officers, who issued divers precepts for the preservation of health : despite frequent supplications before God, both by way of public procession and private prayer, early in the spring of the aforesaid year it began to manifest itself and its awful effects in a manner as terrible as it was marvellous to behold.

“In the East, bleeding at the nose had been a sure sign of inevitable death ; but here, in men and women alike, the primary symptom was a certain swelling under the arms or in the groin, which in some cases grew to the size of an ordinary apple, in others to that of an egg, while in others again it exceeded the first, or did not attain the bulk of the second ; and the common people called them *Gavoccioli*. Starting from one or other of the above-mentioned parts, within a little while this fatal tumour began to spread over the entire surface of the body ; but then its character changed, and in many in-

stances it eventuated in an eruption of black or purple spots, sometimes large and few, at others many but minute. And as the original *Gavoccioli* had been, and still was, a sure precursor of death, so also may the appearance of this eruption be said to have sealed the patient's doom. For this was a malady in which neither the prescription of the physician, nor the virtue of the drug, appeared to be of any avail; indeed, whether owing to the obstinacy of the disease itself or to the ignorance of the medical attendants, who failed to make a correct diagnosis, and consequently did not adopt the proper remedies—for besides the recognised practitioners an immense crop of quacks, male and female, without the slightest previous knowledge of medicine, sprang up in this crisis—the result was that but few patients recovered, and, what is more, almost all the fatal cases terminated within three days, more or less, of the first appearance of the symptoms I have already noted, and this without the supervention of fever or any other aggravation. The plague, too, was the more virulent in that it could be, and frequently was, communicated by the sick to the whole, just as fire catches dry or greasy things placed in its immediate neighbourhood. Nay, more; not only were those who talked or sat with the sick liable to take the disease and die themselves, but the infection seemed to be conveyed even by contact with the clothes of the patient, or with anything else that he had touched or used. 'Tis truly a marvellous tale that which I have to tell; and had not the details been witnessed by many eyes, including my own, so far from writing it, I should scarcely venture to believe it myself, however trustworthy my informant might be. For, I declare, so eminently infectious was this pestilence, that not only was it conveyed from man to man, but—and this is far more remarkable—anything belonging to one who was ill or had died of it, if touched even by some other animal than man, communicated the disease, as was observed in many obvious cases—ay, and produced death almost immediately. Of this, among other instances, the following occurred one day under my own eyes (for, as I said, I was an eye-witness of the plague). The rags of a poor wretch who had died of the disease were thrown into the public street; two swine approached, and, as their manner is, began to rummage among them with their snouts, and then, taking

them between their teeth, proceeded to toss them against their chaps. Within a few minutes, after turning round and round as though they had been poisoned, they both dropped down dead over the rags with which they had thus so rashly meddled.

“ Now, the result of incidents like this, and many others yet more startling, was that all kinds of fears and fancies were engendered in the minds of those who were not attacked, insomuch that almost to a man they were led to adopt one, and that a most heartless course, to wit, of loathing and shunning the sick and all that concerned them, each man thinking thus to secure his own safety. Some there were who imagined that a temperate manner of living and the avoidance of all excess were of great service towards withstanding the evil ; they therefore formed clubs and lived aloof from their neighbours, shutting themselves up in houses where there was no sickness, and where they could live best. There they discussed, but with the utmost moderation, the most delicate viands and the choicest wines ; and thus, without venturing to speak to a soul, or caring to hear any news of death or sickness from without, they diverted themselves with music and whatever other pastimes chanced to be at their disposal. . There were others, again, who held a contrary opinion, maintaining that the most certain preventive of so dire a calamity lay in a course of deep drinking and pleasure-taking, in constant hilarity and diversion, in the satisfaction of every appetite to the top of its bent ; in a laughing indifference to all that was going on around. And this doctrine they put in practice to the best of their power by repairing day and night alike, now to this tavern, now to that, and drinking to excess ; very frequently, too, they carried out their system in their neighbours' houses, if they chanced to find anything there in harmony with their tastes, and pleasures. And this they could easily do, for everyone seemed to have abandoned all hope of life, and ceased to have any regard for either property or self ; wherefore most of the houses became common inns, and the stranger entered and used them as their own masters might have done. Yet, while living thus the life of brute beasts, they still did their utmost to avoid all intercourse with the sick. Moreover, so long as our city lay in this state of misery

and affliction, the sacred authority of the laws, both human and divine, was well nigh in abeyance, for those who should have administered them were, in the same proportion as other men, either dead or sick, or else they were so scantily supplied with subordinates that they could perform none of their functions; the result being that every man was permitted to do what seemed good in his own eyes.

“Thirdly, there were those who held a middle course between these two extremes, neither limiting themselves in their eating and drinking as did the first, nor launching out into excesses of drinking and what not, as did the second; but they ate and drank as much as their appetites demanded, and, so far from shutting themselves up, walked about as usual, carrying in their hands, some of them flowers, some aromatic herbs, and others different kinds of strong-smelling drugs, which they kept putting to their nostrils in the belief that it was an excellent thing to fortify the nerves by the aid of such powerful odours; for, in point of fact, the entire atmosphere seemed to be tainted and foul, by reason of the stench which proceeded from the dead and dying, and the scent of the various nostrums employed. Others, again, entertained a more heartless, though peradventure a safer, opinion, declaring that there is no better remedy against plagues than to fly before them—none, indeed, so good. Under this impression many men and women, regarding nothing save their personal security, abandoned their city, their own houses and homes, relations and property alike, and betook themselves to foreign lands, or, if not that, at least to the country districts. Was it that they thought God’s wrath in punishing the iniquity of men with this pestilence would not reach their hiding-places, but would vent itself in the destruction of those only who were found within the city, or did they fancy that the last hour of Florence was come, and that none within her walls would be saved alive?

“Albeit the persons holding these different opinions did not all die, they did not for that matter all escape; on the contrary, many of each way of thinking fell sick, and having themselves, when in good health, set the example to others, were now in their turn constantly abandoned, and left to perish miserably. And over and above the fact that one citizen avoided another,

and that no one cherished any regard for his neighbour (even relations seldom or never holding any intercourse with each other, or, if they did, keeping their distance the while), the affliction engendered so terrible a panic in the breasts of both men and women that brother deserted brother, the uncle his nephew, the sister her brother, and oftentimes the wife her husband; ay—and this is yet more extraordinary, if not absolutely incredible—fathers and mothers refused with loathing to tend or even visit their own children, as though there were no tie whatever between them. As a necessary consequence of such indifference, the sick of either sex, whose name was legion, were left to the charity of friends—and friends of this kind were rare—or to the avarice of servants, who did their work very inadequately for enormous wages, and even on these terms but few were to be had. Moreover, they were invariably coarse-minded men and women, as a rule utterly inexperienced, and serving hardly any other purpose than that of giving the patients what they asked for, and seeing when they died; in many cases, too, the end of their employment was that they lost both life and lucre. Owing to this desertion on the part of neighbours, relations, and friends, and to the scarcity of nurses, many died who, peradventure, had they met with proper attention, had escaped; whereas from the lack of suitable attendance, which the sick were unable to procure, and the virulence of the plague itself, the number of those who perished day and night in the city was astounding to the ear, and yet more so to the eye. Under such circumstances, what wonder if various customs, contrary to those formerly in vogue, obtained among the survivors?

“It was the practice then, as now, when a death occurred, for the women-relations and neighbours to assemble within doors and mourn with the family, while in like manner in front of the house the male relations were joined by their friends and fellow-citizens in considerable numbers; then, in proportion to the quality of the deceased, clergy came, and the dead man was carried on the shoulders of his peers, with all the funeral pomp of taper and chant, to the church he had selected before his death. But as the plague waxed more and more virulent, these usages were in great measure, if not entirely, abandoned, and new ones adopted in their room. For not only did many

persons die with but few women about them to make lamentation, but a vast number perished without a single witness of their end, and rare, indeed, were the deathbeds to which were accorded the wailings and bitter tears of kinsfolk; instead whereof, for the most part, laughter and jest and festive merry-making became the rule; and the women, neglecting to a great extent the pious offices which it is the part of their sex to fulfil, and with a view, as they fancied, to their own safety, easily fell into the new fashion. It was seldom that a body was followed to the church by more than ten or twelve neighbours, and even then they were no honourable and illustrious fellow-citizens who supported the bier, but a species of gravediggers, improvised among the lower classes, and nicknamed *Sextonets*, made a bargain for the performance of the office. These men hurried along the streets behind four or five clergy, with few tapers and sometimes none at all, and carried the body in most cases, not to the church which the deceased had selected, but to that which chanced to be nearest. There the priests, with the assistance of these *Sextonets*, deposited it in the first unoccupied grave that presented itself, without stopping to perform a long and solemn funeral service. In the case of the lower, and indeed in great measures of the middle, classes, the wretchedness was even more extreme; for, remaining as they did indoors from poverty, or hope of escape, or at any rate never venturing beyond the immediate neighbourhood of their dwellings, they sickened daily by thousands, and inasmuch as they were neither nursed, nor tended in any respect whatever, perished hopelessly. Many, indeed, died day and night in the public streets, while others, albeit they certainly drew their last breath within doors, yet previously, by the stench which proceeded from their bodies, had convinced their neighbours that the hand of death was upon them; with such persons and those who were actually dying the place literally swarmed.

“The neighbours almost universally observed one and the same rule, as well from fear of the harm that might befall them from the corruption of the dead bodies, as from a feeling of charity towards the dead themselves. With their own hands, and the assistance of certain bearers when they

were to be had, they dragged the bodies of the deceased from the houses, and placed them before the street doors, where, especially in the morning, they might be seen in countless numbers by anyone going the rounds. Then they brought biers, or in default of these even tables, and placed the corpses thereon, a single bier often sufficing for two or three bodies, and in very many instances husband and wife, two or three brothers, or father and son, were in this manner borne away. Many and many a time, when two priests were going with a single cross to conduct a funeral, three or four biers, supported by the hired bearers, would follow in the train, and where they had expected to bury a single body, they found six or eight, and sometimes even more, waiting their ministrations. Not, however, that these funerals were the scene of tears, or gorgeous with procession and taper in honour of the departed. No; things had come to such a pass, that men thought no more of their fellow-creatures who died than nowadays we should think of so many goats; and it was made abundantly evident that the comparatively rare and slight calamities which, following in the natural course of events, men, be they ever so wise, cannot be taught to bear patiently, now when multiplied and aggravated to such an enormous extent, even fools learned to regard with calmness, if not with absolute indifference.

“The graveyards not sufficing for the reception of so vast a number of bodies, daily, hourly, thronging the churches, and a strong wish prevailing to give to each, in accordance with ancient usage, a recognised resting-place, immense ditches were dug and used as church cemeteries, the actual churchyards being full. In these chance comers were buried by hundreds, huddled together, like a cargo, bale upon bale, in a ship's hold, with a thin layer of earth between each, until the top of the ditch was reached.

“Not to enter into further details of miseries now happily past, I may add that, while this fatal season was running its course in the city, the surrounding country was in no wise exempt. For there,—not to mention the castles which, as regards the pestilence, were the city in miniature—the poor wretched labourers and their families, scattered among

the little towns and villages, and far from all aid of physician and nurse, perished like cattle, day and night alike, on the roads, on their patches, or in their humble dwellings. Wherefore, after their own fashion, the survivors here, as in the city, became utterly demoralized, and took no thought for their property or their occupation. But, as though expecting to die each day as it dawned, they busied themselves, not in promoting the increase of their flocks and herds, in tending their crops, or in furthering the fruits of their past labours, but in consuming all the produce which they had ready to hand. And thus the oxen and the asses, the sheep and the goats, the swine and the poultry—ay, and man's most faithful companion, the very dogs—were driven away from their proper habitations, and left to range at will over the fields, where still smiled the corn ungarnered, unreaped, abandoned. Many of them, obeying a natural instinct, after feeding all day, used of their own accord to come back sated, at night, to their stalls and styes.

“To return to the city. What more can be said save that so bitter was the vengeance of heaven, and in some sort so great the heartlessness of men, that between the months of March and July, what with the virulence of the plague itself, and the fact that, owing to the panic which possessed the minds of those who were yet in health, so many of the sick were ill nursed or actually deserted, more than a hundred thousand human beings, according to common belief, perished within the walls of Florence? Perhaps before the calamity no one would have believed that the city numbered so many inhabitants in all. Ah! how many a proud palace and princely pile, once alive with lords and ladies and lacqueys, was swept of its inmates down to the lowest scullion! How many a famous line and splendid inheritance was left bereaved of its lawful heir! How many gallant men and lovely women were cut off in their prime! How many a merry youth, whom Galen, Hippocrates, and Æsculapius themselves would have pronounced to be in the heyday of health, breakfasted with his kinsfolk, or his clubfellows, and supped with his forefathers in the other world!”



MRS. ASHTON.

CHAPTER I.

THE ROW.

TWO young men, on a lovely morning in June, were lounging in the Row, criticizing the faces and toilettes of the gay crowd of blooming or passez women, whose sole aim in life seemed to be "frivolling" and flirting.

"How Spanish that girl looks!—what a sweet face!" Arthur Ashton exclaimed to his companion, Captain Fane.

"What! that fuzzy red-wigged woman, like a French Judas Iscariot?" Fane enquired, adding: "There's a friend of mine, Miss Neville, now,—I call that a sweet face; see, the lovely blonde, in brown and yellow. "*Elle est blonde, elle est ronde, pour tout le monde, excepté moi,*" he hummed *sotto voce*. Then noticing the absorbed look of his friend, and following his admiring glance, he exclaimed, "Ah! now I see the Spanish Dona, she's Lady Cecilia Sefton's niece, or daughter, or ward."

"Can you introduce me?" Ashton eagerly asked.

"Hit, by Jove! Yes—if I see her pretty and faded ladyship."

The young men passed up and down the Row and discovered "*l'objet*," as Fane remarked, being fond of airing off his French, sitting under the shadow of a leafy elm and a large crimson sunshade. Lady Cecilia was well-dressed, but a less airy style would have been more becoming than the butterfly costume she affected, a pale cream colour picked out with crimson, a large coarse straw bonnet à la Basket, covering an edifice of fluffy fair curls, giving her back view a juvenile look.

Arthur Ashton's dark-haired beauty was near her; hastily throwing away his cigar he followed his friend.

Lady Cecilia received the young men graciously, and presenting Mr. Ashton to her niece, absorbed Captain Fane's

attention, keeping up a running fire of gossip and very small talk. Goodnatured as the Captain was, he looked wistfully at the face of his friend, who out of earshot was bending sentimentally over Miss Sefton.

"You remind me of the women I have seen in Spain, and your walk is quite Spanish," Ashton was saying.

"Where can you have seen me walk?" Miss Sefton enquired, with an amused expression.

"This morning, when you passed with your fair friend. I told Fane I could fancy myself on the Prado or the Alameda rather than in Hyde Park. Surely you must have Spanish blood in your veins."

"No, British *pur sang*," she laughingly replied. "I have never been abroad, except to Paris, and that doesn't count. I know I look foreign, because I've been complimented on my good English and pure accent. I rather like looking Spanish; and when I was young, quite a child you know, I did so want to learn the guitar, with a sky blue riband round my neck, like the order of the Garter, or is it the Bath? and I used to play the castanets and dance the *cachucha*—but Auntie was cross and put out, and said I was absurdly romantic."

"Well, if you care to sing Spanish songs, let me send for some; they are very original and will suit you admirably."

"Ah! Supposing I sing."

"Of course you do; you've a singing face—and I'll bring you the songs, if I may?"

"I think you must be *very* kind, and teach me how to pronounce them."

Arthur Ashton looked grateful for the suggestion, and asked eagerly "when he should do so?"

She laughed merrily: "I don't know, we *are* so awfully gay just now. This afternoon, fête at the Horticultural, dinner at Lady Harcourt's, and the Grants' ball. Do you know them? every one does."

"Yes; I shall be at the fête and at the Grants' dance, I can't dine at Lady Harcourt's—What a pity! Are you going to the Prince's garden party? If so we shall meet again to-morrow."

"Oh! that will be delightful!" she exclaimed, colouring vividly, as Mr. Ashton hastily echoed her remark,

"Delightful indeed!"

"I mean the garden party," she said, somewhat severely.

"So do I! Do you never ride to the Row?"

"To-morrow I shall ride, in the morning."

"How fortunate! I ride to-morrow. Of course, this is your first season, and you are enjoying it thoroughly."

"Indeed I am; it's all fairyland and sunshine and never a cloud."

Lady Cecilia turning to her niece, the pleasant tête-à-tête was interrupted. "Stephenia, dear, I've been persuading Captain Fane to help with our tableaux, and he has half promised."

"Oh! do, please," urged Stephenia, "Do you know, Aunt, he'll make a splendid Fra Lippo Lippi."

"To be sure," Lady Cecilia replied. "I've been trying to remember the name, but my memory is so treacherous, and perhaps Mr. — I've forgotten; what name did you say?" (This in a stage aside to Captain Fane.)

"Thank you, Mr. Ashton; perhaps you'll act with us."

"I'll act with pleasure,"—"as audience," he was about to add, when he reflected the rehearsals would throw him into Miss Sefton's society. Turning to her, he hypocritically professed the greatest interest in the tableau, and hastily enquired when and where they were to be.

"A month hence, at our house at Twickenham. Our grandest will be Fra Lippo Lippi painting the altar-piece at Sta. Chiara, and one of the novices sitting for the Madonna, and you know he ran away with her; she was Mrs. Lippo Lippi."

"Oh, but that's romance!" Ashton said.

"Please, you must not spoil our best tableau, and I've seen a picture of it."

"Then it must be true. Anyhow, the ex-friar won't mind a lie more or less; and are you the Madonna?"

"No, a lovely blonde with a Raffaelesque face. I'm to be 'Mignon.'"

"And you'll sing 'Kennst du das Land?'"

Tableaux don't sing, and I don't speak German."

Two o'clock, my dear; the carriage must be there."

My Cecilia rose and fluttered airily to the corner, when she bade her escort good-bye.

Arthur Ashton put Miss Sefton into the carriage he had hired, "A ce soir!"

"What a dull morning !" yawned Fane.
"What a delightful morning !" exclaimed Ashton.

CHAPTER II.

ARTHUR ASHTON'S LOVE.

Lady Cecilia Sefton's pretty villa stood in lovely grounds on the banks of the Thames. On the evening of the 30th the crimson sun went down, leaving a golden glory in the heavens and a marvellous light, against which the trees stood out sharply defined; grey willows, dipping their leaves in the clear water, alone disturbed the silent glassy stream, in which the ever-changing rainbow glories of the sky were mirrored; the stillness was unbroken, slowly the luminous atmosphere darkened when a blaze of light flashed from the numerous windows of the house, the air vibrated, filled with low rippling laughter and the distant hum of talk. The reception rooms were crowded with guests. The conservatory was converted into the theatre, and white and gold pillars, draped with crimson, formed the proscenium. The tableaux were highly applauded, the gem being undeniably Miss Sefton's "Mignon." She realized not only Goethe's exquisite creation, but Arthur Ashton's ideal. As the fair actors reappeared in their more fashionable if less picturesque costumes, Stephenia, robed in a cloud of tulle and trailing silks, was surrounded by a bevy of admirers, gaily receiving their homage; while Arthur Ashton, standing aloof, watched the bright beauty he vowed to call his own. Wistfully she looked around,—whom did she seek? Their eyes met; her's drooped; when, as if impelled by magnetic force, she walked swiftly across the room, and shyly accosted him.

From the glass door, and they stepped into the garden and wandered towards the rippling river, gleaming silvery white in the moon's light.

Then and there he asked her love; and, blushing rosy red with happiness, she murmured her consent.

He clasped her fondly in his arms. "Stephenia, my own! my darling!"

Again and again he kissed her.

The willows murmured softly to the shining river.

She shivered.

"Mr. Ashton, let us go in—what will Aunt say?"

"Mr. Ashton!" he repeated; "my name is Arthur."

"Arthur, please, please let me go;" and with gentle force she drew back. "Think of Aunt."

"My darling, what can she say?—she will never find one to love you as I love you—she may look higher, but what then?—if, darling, you love me nothing shall separate us."

"Then, nothing shall separate us. Promise, that you will love me for ever."

"For ever with a very big E," merrily he answered her, adding, "Honour bright!—until death do us part."

"Until death do us part—so be it!" She repeated the words in a whisper so intense that for a moment he shrank back, startled—good commonplace fellow that he was!—only for a moment. The next Stephenia's arms were round him, and, as if to ratify the compact, she raised her mouth to his,—one kiss, and she tore herself away.—"Farewell! be faithful and true!"

The wind rose, a dark cloud hid the moon, the willows chaunted in mournful rhythm to the black river, as the lovers parted. "When, where and how will they meet again?"

CHAPTER III.

MRS. ASHTON.

ASHTON TOWERS stands still on the brow of a hill, sloping down to the river Ashe. The exterior was rebuilt in the time of George IV., an ugly house—albeit with a certain grandeur in its pseudo-classical style, well carried out in every respect. A façade of marble columns with boldly carved capitals, and a wide flight of steps, guarded on either side by a calm-eyed solemn sphinx, led to a broad terrace, shaded here and there by gigantic cedar trees, that creaked ominously as the wind stirred and swayed their

cone-laden branches. The undulating lawn was edged by the brawling river, winding, bright and shining as a silver riband, around it and three sides of the park.

The prettiest room was Mrs. Ashton's boudoir, oval shaped, with a domed ceiling, whereon chubby cupids and loves floated airily, painted in shadowy grisaille; a low divan, covered in sage green satin, was fitted round the room; the satin wood furniture, cumbrous but comfortable, was relieved by gilt mouldings. There were no pictures, but from the long windows the view was more beautiful in its everchanging glories than art's masterpieces: a glass door opened into a conservatory, whence a dreamy perfume of rare exotics filled the room, and from a white Carrara marble fountain, exquisitely chiselled, came a pleasant sound of falling water.

To this bower, fifty years since, Squire Ashton brought his bride, and in this her favourite room she now sat—a widow.

The silence around her was full of sweet memories. The harp, shrouded in its holland cover, spoke eloquently of happy bygone hours. The stately little old lady, who, clad in her black robe, relieved by delicate white lace, looked fitly surrounded with pomp and grandeur. Mrs. Ashton was haughty, imperious and clever, her hooked nose and restless black eyes owed to the silvery hair of age a softer look than of right belonged to them. She was put out, and the knitting pins clicked fiercely together as they moved rapidly in her long slender fingers. A tap at the door called forth an impatient, "Come in!"

Her son Arthur entered.

The six years since, at his mother's wish, he parted from his first love, Stephenia Sefton, have not improved him; careless in dress and appearance, he has a hesitating dissatisfied look, as if always seeking for something and never finding it.

Mrs. Ashton tossed a letter to him, in silence. He read it, and said: "Well!"

"Well, indeed!" the indignant old lady retorted; "it's very far from well. I will never, never give my consent."

"Mother, is it not enough that you have sacrificed one son to your pride?"

"Sacrificed! Ungrateful boy! are you so lost to decency as not to feel that the Lady Margaret Neville is a fitter

mother for your child than the baseborn daughter of Sir Stephen Sefton? Are you not happy?"

He did not look so. She continued:

"Clifford is young, and this fancy is only a schoolboy's sickly sentimentality."

Arthur, turning to the letter, read aloud: "I do not send you Juanita's photo. None can do justice to her bright ever-changing beauty. But, dearest mother, when you see and know her, I am convinced, hard as you are to please, you will love her."

"Now to the point," Mrs. Ashton interrupted. "Pass on to where the infatuated boy speaks of her family."

"Mdlle. de Sevilla is well off. I know little of her belongings, as, since the death of her mother, she has been staying with the Princess Colonna, in Rome. She is strong-minded, independent, accomplished, and fascinating, looking older than her age—twenty."

"Don't read out any more love-sick rubbish. Depend upon it, she's an old woman entangling my poor silly boy. But *I* shall not be so easily imposed upon."

"Why not let him marry?" Arthur gently said; "it seems all right."

"All wrong!" his mother snappishly observed. "You always were a Job's comforter. Go—tell your wife, and send her to me."

Arthur went, and the old lady, taking off her spectacles, remained lost in thought. Then her face brightened, and when the Lady Margaret came she found her mother-in-law less excited than she had been led to expect.

"Sit down on this low chair, Maggie dear," Mrs. Ashton graciously began, "while I tell you our troubles."

Lady Margaret smiled, hearing the familiar "Maggie." Few called her other than Margaret.

"Arthur has told me of Clifford's romantic folly," she replied, in a clear soprano voice. "Of course, you refuse your consent to this Spanish match."

"Of course. I intend Cliffe to marry Flora Mainwaring, but he is weak and obstinate; it won't do to oppose him, I must humour him. If he should bring the girl over here, providential means must, may, be found to break off the engagement. Where is your cousin Captain Everingham? Would he stay with us and help amuse the fair Dona? he is

fascinating, and the time will pass agreeably enough; she might be dull in the old house with the old woman."

"I see," Lady Margaret curtly observed; adding, "You forget Arthur's unaccountable dislike to poor Frank. He calls him a handsome unprincipled rascal."

"Jealousy, Maggie!—nothing more. Cousin Frank admired you, and when you were first married it might have been imprudent—but now!" . . .

Mrs. Ashton tapped impatiently on the table, as the younger woman, with a slight increase of colour in her pale face, replied slowly:

"Now that we are an old married couple, you think Frank is safe; well, so do I—so be it. I will write to-night, we shall not be with you until the New Year's Eve. But Frank will, I know, gladly come at once. He is very fond of dear Clifford, and is sure to admire Mdlle. de Sevilla. Shall you ask Flora?"

"Thank you, dear, so much—no; I will see how things progress, and ask Flora later."

"You are wise," Lady Margaret said. "Frank might fall in love with her, she is rich and fair."

As she rose to leave, Mrs. Ashton kissed her, and resumed her knitting with a somewhat less troubled expression.

CHAPTER IV.

HER SONS.

CLIFFORD ASHTON and his fiancée were staying at Ashton Towers. Somewhat uneasy at the result of his plan, he was gradually becoming reassured. Mdlle. de Sevilla laid herself out to please and fascinate his mother; her tact was such that the "*entente cordiale*" seemed perfect. She devoted herself unobtrusively to the old lady, carefully avoiding breaking in upon the tête-à-têtes she had with her son, contenting herself meanwhile with the services of Captain Everingham, who was a willing "cavalière servente" to the fair Spaniard.

Clifford left her very much to the gallant officer, who was initiating her into the mysteries of skating, was fast falling

in love with his pupil, and drifting into the danger Mrs. Ashton had foreseen.

Very charming Juanita looked, wrapped in glossy furs, a bright glow on her clear cheeks, her large black eyes flashing from under the coquettish hat that coiffed her so becomingly, as, leaning indolently back in a chair, the handsome guardsman pushing her swiftly over the ice, she gracefully smoked a tiny cigarette, and, archly looking up, begged him "not to betray her to Mdme. Ashton, who was so British and would be so shocked."

If the rambles in the morning were dangerous, not less so were the evenings, after dinner, when Juanita, her brilliant beauty set off by the light, sang the songs Captain Everingham liked best. An accomplished musician, her Spanish ballads were sung as only a Spaniard can sing them, addressing the audience in a rich toned "voce parlando" that went straight to the heart of at least one of the three listeners around her.

Mrs. Ashton, hearing the highly cultivated sympathetic contralto voice, almost faltered in her purpose; it may be, she yearned, in her loneliness, for a daughter to love and cherish; and Juanita, in sweet and touching songs, pleaded her cause more surely than Clifford's daily arguments.

On New Year's Eve, in the twilight, as the shadows deepened, Juanita was singing—

Una paloma blanca,
Blanca como la nieve.

The words rose clear and ringing as Arthur Ashton entered the room. He had, with his wife and child, arrived late in the afternoon. As he listened tears filled his eyes. It was a simple ballad, one he had taught Stephenia in the happy past. By what fatality did he hear those words again—perfectly pronounced and sung by a rich full voice? Vividly the melody carried him back to the memory of his lost love, his only love; and his heart beat fast. To break the spell, he put the dying embers of the fire together, kindling a bright flame, as the light flashed across his face, the minstrel's voice faltered, the song was hushed. Clifford greeted his brother warmly, and introduced him to his future sister.

In the dusk, Mr. Ashton felt, rather than saw, a trem-

bling white hand timidly laid in his, and quickly withdrawn, as, muttering a few confused words, she left the room.

Arthur dressed hurriedly for dinner, and strangely troubled awaited Mdle. de Sevilla's re-appearance. Each time the door opened, only to disappoint him; at last, his brother entered, bearing Juanita's excuses; suffering from a severe headache, she begged them not to expect her, she would join them at dinner later, if she felt better.

Mr. Ashton's duties as host compelled him to pay attention to the lady near him. Yet, he anxiously watched the chair left vacant beside Captain Everingham. Suddenly he started, it was occupied. Mdle. de Sevilla must have glided in very quietly. Turned to her neighbour he could only see the heavy coils of blue black hair held by a coral comb. She took a flower laid near her plate, fastened it into her brooch, flashing a bright look of thanks across to Clifford. As she did so, Arthur recognized her. After six years he again beheld his only love—Stephenia Sefton.

She was changed. The happy look of careless youth was missing—in its place suffering and grief had traced lines, albeit slight ones. Long and fixedly he gazed, until, compelled to meet his eyes, she looked at him. A burning colour slowly flushed her pale face.

Stephenia had not forgotten him. Mechanically he sat through the dinner, until his mother rising, he opened the door, when Mdle. de Sevilla passed, she laid her finger on her lips. Silently he bowed.

He waited impatiently to join the ladies. Once more with Stephenia the mystery would be solved. She was sitting near his wife. What a contrast the brilliant base-born beauty presented to the high-born dame, her grand beauty crushing the insipid prettiness of the Lady Margaret! Juanita avoided his look, but as his wife rose and went to the piano he took her seat.

"Stephenia, tell me," he began, in a low voice.

"Stephenia Sefton is no more," she interrupted him, and sought to leave him. He detained her.

"Tell me, I am forgiven, and why you are here."

"Your wife is watching us—is she jealous?" Before Arthur could answer, Captain Everingham joined them. "Senorita, will you not keep your promise and sing me *La Calesera*?"

"Certainly, Don Francisco—I never break my promises."

Sweetly smiling she glided across the room, with the floating movement peculiar to her: how well Arthur remembered it! He trembled for himself, yet he felt strangely happy in breathing the same air as the woman he loved,—the only woman who had power to move him!

CHAPTER V.

HER DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW.

Lady Margaret felt a vague apprehension. Mr. Ashton was becoming snappish. Clifford and Juanita seemed on the verge of a quarrel. Captain Everingham alone, with faith in himself and his fascination, was blind to the impending storm brooding sullenly over the party assembled at the Towers. The gathered clouds burst on a clear frosty afternoon. Juanita, impatiently declining Frank's proffered escort, went alone in the Park. Walking briskly until she reached the rustic bridge spanning the lake leading to the Grotto Island, her step grew slower, she hesitated, and glanced nervously around. No one was in sight. She looked at her watch and sighing sadly crossed the bridge, and, taking a key from her pocket opened the iron grating leading to the labyrinthine grotto, leaving the key in the gate. She entered, timidly shrinking from the darkness. On this wintry afternoon, the long narrow passages were gloomy and cold; gaining courage, she proceeded and reached a vaulted chamber, dimly lighted from above. Glittering stalactites hung from the roof and numberless niches and cells, the walls glistened with brilliant spar, and from a large conch shell a limpid stream flowed in a bright line of silver into the deep lake surrounding the island.

Covering her face with her hands, Stephenia waited, starting, when Arthur Ashton's voice broke the stillness around her.

"This is most kind of you,—more, much more than I deserve. I have longed to see you alone. I hunger and thirst to hear you speak to me—if only one little word, as in the days gone by."

Stephenie's face was turned from him. "Why, oh! why are you here under a false name?"

"Not a false name"—she exclaimed bitterly; "it is my mother's—why am I here? why? your brother loves me—is it so strange that what one brother despised, the other should worship? Chance threw him in my way, and I resolved to win him."

"You do not love him, Stephenie. Would you marry him?" Arthur Ashton's voice trembled.

"Do you love the Lady Margaret? Do husbands always love their wives? Clifford loves me, and I—oh! Arthur, when you sacrificed me to your mother's pitiful pride, when you made me suffer for another's sin, I loved and trusted you as I shall never love or trust again. Such love can never return; but such love as you give your wife, I can give my husband,—and Clifford loves me. Farewell!"

She turned to leave him. In that moment, wife, child, honour, all were forgotten. He barred the exit.

"Listen, Stephenie! I have loved you, you only, day and night for six long weary years; your memory has haunted me as it will haunt me to my dying day; your presence maddens me. As I love you, he can never love; as I suffer, he can never suffer. I love you,—say you will not marry him."

No sound passed her lips, blindly she sought the door.

"Speak to me, Stephenie!" He grasped her hand—it trembled. The hot blood rushed to her face, surging back to the wildly beating heart, leaving her white as marble, until as a lily, storm o'erswept, she swayed forward, and would have fallen but for the strong arms round her. Her head sank on his breast. Their lips met. A long deep drawn sigh wailed thro' the dim corridor. Stephenie broke from Arthur's embrace, and tottered down the dark winding passage. For one brief moment he remained dazed, then wildly hurried after her; but his progress was arrested by her inanimate form. An icy chill struck his heart, tenderly he raised her in his arms, and murmuring, "Stephenie, my darling!" he bore her to the entrance of the Grotto.

The red rays of the setting sun fell on the white face of his wife.

Dire confusion reigned in Mrs. Ashton's boudoir; the accused and the accuser stood face to face. Stephenie,

exposed and unmasked by the Lady Margaret, without an attempt to justify or plead for herself, implored Clifford to take her away.

Mrs. Ashton imperiously commanded him to remain.

"Clifford, my son, if you go with that woman, as base as she is basely born, you leave me for ever; and so long as I live I will never look upon your face again; choose, my son, between your mother and your mistress."

"Mother! she is my wife!"

CHAPTER VI.

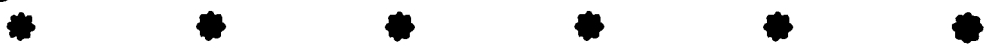
MRS. ASHTON'S WILL.

Stephenia's triumph was Mrs. Ashton's deathblow; from that hour she drooped. In vain did her eldest born soothe her; she pined for her favourite child, and would not be comforted.

Day by day she postponed signing the will which disinherited him.

One evening, feeling more than usually weak and depressed, she resolved to accomplish this act of justice to the son who had sacrificed his happiness to please her. Bidding her housekeeper and the steward hold themselves in readiness in the adjoining room, she locked the door and read over the document, awaiting nothing but her signature, sadly thinking the while of her best beloved son and his treacherous wife. In a trembling hand she added, "To my son Clifford's wife I leave the memory of the evil she has wrought me and mine."

Suddenly she felt ill, what was it? Death foreshadowing? Hastily seizing the hand-bell she rang, forgetting she had fastened the door. She waited, hours it seemed—in vain, again she rang—what was the knocking? She was turning faint, when, rallying her failing strength by a strong effort, she feebly wrote her name; and as the pen dropped from her nerveless grasp, the door was violently burst open by the steward, who entered, followed by the housekeeper. Their kind old mistress was unconscious. Mr. Ashton and Lady Margaret were sent for, but she never rallied nor spoke again. In the night she died.



Mr. and Lady Margaret Ashton are living at Ashton Towers. Merry, happy voices fill the spacious room and ring through the long corridors.

On their eldest son's twenty-first birthday, a group was gathered in the sunny morning-room (once Mrs. Ashton's boudoir) eagerly discussing the plans for the day's amusement, when a letter was given to Mr. Ashton. He read it and groaned. From the gay chatter and silvery laughter of her children, the wife turned to her husband. Without a word he pointed to the letter, and Lady Margaret read :

“ Lincoln's Inn, New Court, July 23.

“ My dear Sir,—I hasten to communicate to you some intelligence, which, though it may prove unfounded, is yet so serious that I should be wanting in the discharge of my duty did I not call your attention to it as other than the matter of the last importance. I had a visit this morning from Mr. McQueen, a solicitor in good practice, and, as I have every reason to believe, a highly respectable man. He came on behalf of Mrs. Clifford Ashton, your late brother's widow ; and to my great surprise, and I may add, grief, informed me that the will of the late Mrs. Ashton, under which you became possessor of the Ashton Towers property, is invalid, by reason of the attesting witnesses having signed it after your mother's decease, an event, I need not remind you, that occurred while these persons were in attendance in an anteroom, awaiting her summons to present themselves.

“ Strangely enough, your mother never seems to have thought of making a will until what she considered the undutiful conduct of your brother gave her the idea of excluding him from any benefit from the property, when she desired me to prepare that which is now called in question. Her instructions were followed, and the document sent down to her, with directions for having her signature properly witnessed. She, it seems, ordered two of the upper servants to come to her at a certain hour of the evening on which she died ; and, having made them clearly understand where they were to sign, told them to wait in an adjoining room until she should summon them. Almost immediately afterwards she was seized by the attack that proved fatal. In the confusion that ensued the will lay unnoticed ; but the next morning the housekeeper saw it, and remembering her

instructions called up the steward, and after some consultation they agreed that it would be right to sign their names in the places that had been pointed out by their late mistress. When, afterwards, you noticed the will it appeared to be a perfectly legal document, and was administered to accordingly. This statement Mr. McQueen supports by the affidavit of Mrs. Peel, the housekeeper, who, you know, retired shortly after Mrs. Ashton's death. The other witness is, I believe, since dead. I shall, of course, make every enquiry that may tend to throw light upon the matter, but I feel it right to say that the evidence bears out the statement; and I must inform you that if this be established you and your brother were joint heirs, and widow and son will claim for half the estate, with interest from the time of your mother's death. I fear this will involve the sale of the estate, as I believe the claim in money would be greater than you could meet; and from what I gather this seems to be your sister-in-law's desire. It seems that the facts were known to your late brother, who incautiously mentioned them to his wife, though during his lifetime he refused to do anything towards altering an arrangement his mother had made.

"I am, dear Sir, &c., &c.,

"JAMES PRICE."

CHAPTER VII.

HER GRANDCHILDREN.

The invalidity of the will was established; and the Ashtons, amid universal sympathy and regret, left the home which had been theirs and their forefathers for years. Mr. Ashton took a small house in the neighbourhood. Ashton Towers was sold to a Mr. Leslie, a wealthy manufacturer.

Stephenia was avenged on the dead woman who had insulted her, on the weak lover who had sacrificed her, and on the Lady Margaret whose jealousy had denounced her. If she felt a passing thrill of pity, remembering the pride Arthur Ashton had in the old home, where she was to have reigned in the days of her happy youth, the feeling was lost in the one aim of her colourless existence, her son Clifford's success.

Ascertaining that the Leslies had an only daughter, an

heiress, and unmarried, she resolved to win her for his wife. She applied for the Ashe Cottage, a small and pretty villa standing in the Park, and thus became their tenant.

After twenty years, Arthur Ashton once more saw his early love—his brother's widow—in the village church, sitting with the Leslies in the Ashton Towers' pew and in his mother's seat. Youth passed, she yet looked wonderfully well, retaining her slight graceful figure, and with scarcely a silver thread in the black hair which heavily shadowed the broad low brow, the mellowed light, streaming in through the richly-stained window (in memory of his mother), shone upon a magnificent woman near whom his wife looked faded—and, alas! fat.

The county families one and all refused to visit the Clifford Ashtons, wondering at the bad taste she had shown in settling in the neighbourhood. She, however, wished for no other society than that of the new comers, the Leslies, with whom she was a great favourite. Time passed, and Clifford Ashton made the most of his intimacy with Mabel Leslie; but the course of his true love was not destined to run smoothly. His adoration and worship might have been rewarded but for an accident—which happened in this way.

One bright sunny afternoon, Mabel Leslie wandered in the Park, past the great giant oaks, past the pine copse, down to the riverside—then, where it ran its shallow course over the sparkling pebbles, seeing a spray of briony in the opposite hedge—she determined to wade over and gather it. No one was in sight, and quickly taking off her pretty buckled shoes and stockings, singing softly the while:

“ She kilted her gown of brown holland,
She kilted it up to her knee,”

She popped a pinky white foot on to a large stepping stone. Alas! the treacherous stone gave way, and, screaming aloud, she fell into the water. In vain she tried to flounder out, she had sprained her ankle, and could not stand without intense pain. The scream brought unlooked for help. On the other side of the river, screened by the quickset hedge, was a stranger, who at once gallantly rushed to the rescue and helped her to limp on to the grassy bank. Of course, he was young and handsome. Mabel, looking up to thank him, saw a pair of dark grey eyes fixed on her, a

slightly amused expression on his sunburnt face. Lifting his straw hat, he enquired if he should fetch assistance from the house.

"Thanks, no! I must manage to hop as far, or my people will be frightened—so stupid of me, but I did so want that wreath of briony," Mabel replied.

With a run and a jump, he cleared the water, and gathering the spray of many-coloured berries, was by her side once more.

"Thank you so much! Isn't it lovely?" she said, blushing slightly at his admiring look, as she twisted the wreath around her neck. "Are you going my way?"

"Yes! we are neighbours, you are living in my old home. I am Norman Ashton, and now that I have introduced myself to Miss Leslie, let me examine her wounded foot, and bandage it—I am a doctor, although a young one, so you may trust me. Give me your handkerchief." He dipped it in the water, assured himself no bones were broken, and bound it round the now swollen ankle. With his help, the young girl rose and tried to walk; but the pain was intense, and seeing her turn white, he exclaimed, "Let me carry you." Before she could answer, he lifted her in his arms, in a matter of fact way, and carried her in silence. The way was long, the ground undulating, not to say, hilly, the sun was shining, and although Norman Ashton was strong and Mabel Leslie, a light weight, they had to rest frequently. The nearer they were to the house the longer the pauses were and the brisker the conversation,—for strangers it was surprising how much they had to say to each other, and how their tastes agreed,—it was impossible to be polite and stiff in their draggle-tailed appearance.

At last the house was reached, Mabel petted and gushed over; and Norman overwhelmed by the gratitude of her parents.

Of course the next day he called to enquire, and gradually the calls were more frequent and the visits longer. Mabel was condemned for some days to the sofa; and Norman could do no less than try to amuse his patient.

CHAPTER VIII.

RIVALS.

Mabel was lying on her couch dreaming of Norman, when the welcome bell sounded, and she roused herself from dreams to the happy reality. The bright colour flew to her face as "Mr. Ashton" was announced, and as quickly receded as Clifford entered. She felt guilty, she had forgotten him; unfeignedly glad as he was to see her, she tried in vain to receive him cordially. At last taking up a book near her he read the title "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table." "Stiffish for an invalid, May—have you given up light literature and poetry?"

"I'm improving my mind," she said, demurely; "don't trouble to read that. Try Tennyson."

Secretly annoyed, he began the "Idylls of the King." Mabel listened with closed eyes.

"Wearing the white flower of a blameless life—"

"Isn't that lovely," he enthusiastically exclaimed. "Why, you haven't heard a word—what did I read last?"

"Oh! I can't be questioned and so very cross-questioned," Mabel replied, yawning and fidgetting; adding, "Isn't that the door bell?"

It was surprising how intent she looked as she listened; and his heart sank within him, noting the shy conscious way in which she greeted Norman Ashton, who entered with Mrs. Leslie. The cousins were introduced, and bowing stiffly, talked "*La pluie et le beau temps*," when Mrs. Leslie being called away Mabel had hard work between her two admirers. Norman as last comer waited for Clifford to go. In vain—time passed, and as he showed no signs of leaving, a heavy frown darkened Norman's brow. He answered Miss Leslie with an effort. Clifford was evidently quite at home with the young girl, even calling her by her pet name "May." An unpardonable offence! But the crowning sin was his bending over Mabel with tender loverlike solicitude and whispering. A burning blush suffused her face, she looked confused and annoyed. Norman, mad with jealousy, rose to go. Heartless flirt! were they engaged? He would never see her more,—never! He tried to say goodbye in an

indifferent tone, and blinding himself to the beseeching look she gave him and her faltering voice, he sternly left "for ever." Looking back he saw that puppy smoothing Mabel's cushion with all the ease of an accepted lover.

* * * * *

Time went on. Mabel learned to know Norman's father and mother; and between his favourite sister and herself a warm feeling sprang up which speedily ripened into friendship. Norman she never met; he was in London, anywhere, where she was not; but Violet Ashton's admiration for her brother helped her in her resolve to marry none other. Waiting and hoping against hope were doing their weary work; her step lost its lightness, her voice rang less merrily than of old, and the large blue eyes had a hitherto unknown tenderness in their depths. So when Violet asked her friend to accompany her on a visit to her aunt, the Countess of Carysfort, the Leslie's gladly gave their consent, hoping much in change of scene to restore their darling's brightness.

Swiftly the days passed. Riding, driving, dancing, boating and flirting went on in an unceasing whirl. From morning till night, not a quiet moment; and now the last evening has come—the last of the Castle dances. Mabel and Violet leave on the morrow. Any faint hope of meeting Norman was doomed to disappointment. She had never seen him since his disapproving frown had crushed her youthful happiness. Would he never forgive her?

Entering the ball room, her diaphanous draperies, of a simple white cloudy fabric, unadorned by flower or jewel, singled her out among the bevy of elaborately got up women rejoicing in her "beauté du diable" and an heiress, no wonder she received more than her share of admiration and attention. With a lovely colour in her cheeks from the dancing and excitement, she looked prettier than usual, standing near the conservatory, framed in the doorway, with a background of glossy green creepers. Looking up, she saw Norman gazing at her, the blush deepened, her eyes fell, and with a fluttering gasp she raised her fan and beckoned to him, involuntarily and with a more imperious gesture than she was aware of. Would he slight her summons, or would her lord and master come and graciously forgive her? The thought made her heart stand still.

Straightway he obeyed her command.

"Can you ever forgive me?"

"Forgive you?" she timidly asked. "What have I to forgive?"

"My behaving like a bear when last I saw you."

She laughed lightly, and replied by a question, "Why do you never come to see us now?"

"Because I'm hard at work; 'for men must work.'"

"'And women must weep!' well, I do think you might have had a little more consideration for your old patient."

He looked enquiringly at her—then abruptly asked how his cousin Clifford was.

Mabel looked confused.

"Where is he?" Norman repeated, as she was silent.

"If I answer the last question, you will see why I cannot answer the first. Mrs. Ashton and her son have left Ashe Cottage, and are gone—I know not where."

"Is he gone and for ever?"

"'It may be for years or it may be for ever,'" Mabel said.

"Mavourneen!" he murmured. Earnestly he read her face, apparently the result was encouraging.

"Mabel, give me your hand, in token of forgiveness."

The little hand obediently fluttered into his, and confidently nestled in the eager grasp that awaited it.

"Mine, for ever and ever!"

Her eyes answered him, before he caught the low tones
"For ever!"

R. A. LEA.



WHAT WILL SOCIETY SAY?

A NOVEL.

By MERVYN MERRITON.

Author of "Romances of the Chivalric Ages," "The Ring-woods of Ringwood," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

WHAT'S this nonsense about Frank taking our daughter away from us?"

It was with this query that Mrs. Leadstone invaded the privacy of the Squire's business-room, when she had left Juliana weeping, miserable, swayed by contending emotions, and still a prisoner, in the library—Frank having, as she knew, joined Claude and Marcus in the smoking room.

"Well, my dear," replied Mr. Leadstone, who as yet only knew of the matter what he had heard from Frank, "if it is nonsense, I don't see no great good in tellin' 'em so, now the move's settled."

"Settled! Not at all settled. Quite a mistake."

"Indeed! Then Juliana's been and changed her mind."

"Juliana has thought better of it."

"Or may be worser!" quoth the Squire, shaking his head doubtfully. "Howsumever, I don't mean to meddle in the business—Juliana knows my opinion—Frank knows it—You know it. Let 'em stay or go as they like."

"What, go and live in Chester Place on a thousand a year?"

"Oh! they'll have more."

"More, eh? I shouldn't wonder if you had actually offered Frank more—a sort of premium to leave me desolate!"

"Desolate! You've got *me*!" And the Squire laughed

at his own joke in the very teeth of his wife's rising wrath.

"Did you offer him anything?"

"I did so—another thousand."

"Of course he accepted it."

"He refused it point blank."

"He's a greater fool than I took him for."

"He's quite clever enough to make double the money by his own exertions."

"Yes—the stage."

"Well, my dear, you well know I ain't the man to advise a young fellow agen workin' at what's suited to his tastes."

"Tastes! Faugh! Our daughter an actor's wife! Enough to drive a mother mad! But no—no, Mr. Leadstone! No! If you'll submit to that degradation, I won't."

"Well, Mrs. Leadstone, all I've got to say is, you must settle it among yourselves. I repeat that I don't mean to meddle."

"I'm very glad to hear that. I compliment you on your discretion. Just one word and I'm gone. I suppose you've no more wish to lose your daughter than I have."

"My dear, I wish for my daughter's happiness—no more—no less."

"Trust to me, and she shall be as happy as she can expect to be—and she shall not leave us!" With which oracular climax, Mrs. Leadstone left the Squire to his solitude and his papers.

"She's like March," he said to himself; "comes in like a lion, and goes out like a lamb."

Mrs. Leadstone had, in fact, as by a sudden inspiration, on learning her husband's fixed intention not "to meddle in the business," resolved upon a new plan of action—a system of temporization. This was almost as suitable to her tastes as was the pursuance of the "scenic" line, while it had the advantage over the last of being less physically exhausting. She found Frank standing at the library door. He had just knocked, and been told by Juliana from within to "come in!" whereupon he had replied that the door was locked. This was overheard by his approaching mother-in-law, who at once popped the key into the key-hole, saying,

"I'm so glad you have come, Frank. You can't think how

you've upset Juliana and me. Poor darling! I locked her in, knowing how unequal she is to conversation with anybody but ourselves. There!"—opening the door—"In with you! Now then, we'll lock out everybody else."

"Any how, I'm a prisoner," thought Frank. "The artful old woman sees fighting won't do, and she's on some new tack."

"The artful old woman" lost not a moment in leading off in her "new tack," with, "My dear Frank, your father"—a title she rarely accorded to Mr. Leadstone as regarded Frank—"has left to me the carrying out of all arrangements connected with this change—I mean the change you have announced to me. Believe me, my dear boy, I am willing, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary—Sit down, dear Frank, there, on the sofa, by your little wifey—notwithstanding all appearances, I say, to the contrary—to fall in with your views, however opposed they may be to my own. Indeed, I will admit that you may be right and I wrong, on the vexed question of our double *ménage*; only don't ask too much of poor human nature—poor maternal nature! Don't violently rend asunder bonds that are twisted round my very heart-strings. Make our separation gradual. You have taken your house—Chester Place, I think you said—I've no objection to the neighbourhood—handy for running in and out. Keep to your bargain. Get in by degrees—you know there'll be a great deal to do in moving."

"My dear Mrs. Leadstone, the house is furnished—we could get into it in an hour."

"Furnished, eh? Of course you don't require to be told that plate and linen are not included; and in furnished houses the glass is generally detestably common."

"Well, really I never thought of that. But——"

"Ha! ha! ha! You're a nice young gentleman to be at the head of a house."

"Of course I shall have to see to it."

"No, Mr. Frank, you'll not have to see to it. Somebody else will see to it for you—and who but your disagreeable, worrying, vexing mother-in-law?"

"Oh! Mrs. Leadstone, pray don't!"

"Joking apart, Frank, your father has commissioned me to

see to it, and I will see to it—set you up well! Now my proposal is this. In a week or ten days you go up to town—put things in order in Chester Place—get together your small establishment. Lady's maid you have—cook I'll make Luttrell see about—kitchen-maid ditto—one housemaid you must try and make suffice—one good man out of livery—stable servants you and your father must talk about. Well, when you've put all that quite straight—I need not tell you it's not to be done in a day, or a week, hardly in a month—however, when it is done, Juliana will follow you!”

Follow him!

So, then, the scheme was out. It was all Mrs. Leadstone's own concoction—unknown to Claude—and consisted in separating the husband from the wife, under the pretence of forwarding the views of the former. And here, disliking, as he does, violent, egotistical, artificial, capricious Mrs. Leadstone, this chronicler is in justice bound to say of her that, having entirely fallen into the snare of Claude Cotherstone's abominable insinuations about Marie Duhamel, her scheme was partly based upon the notion that to separate Frank from Juliana would be to test the truth of those insinuations, by affording him opportunities which would otherwise be denied him. For the rest, she trusted to the chapter of accidents—Frank even partially removed from her daughter—for the resumption of her influence over the latter, and, as a consequence, the maintenance of the present order of things.

Much ado, the reader will perceive, about nothing; since even the particle of common sense which she did possess might have sufficed to show her that one infallible way to attain her end—hitherto neglected, though still within her reach—was the reform of her own conduct to her son-in-law. But by tortuous minds tortuous are ever preferred to straight paths.

As Mrs. Leadstone had foreseen, her artfully-worded proposal not only took the wind out of Frank's sails, but deprived him of any possible support from Juliana. The latter kissed him, saying

“There, dear, now let us have no more discussion. A quiet ten days here, then you go to prepare”—softly and with glistening eyes—“our happy little home!”

Mrs. Leadstone's sharp ears and equally sharp eyes caught these words and the look that accompanied them, but she made no out-spoken comment on them, only her thought was, "Ten days! I wish I could pack him off in two!"

Claude Cotherstone heard of Mrs. Leadstone's temporization scheme with mingled surprise and irritation. He had no faith in her discretion, and, conscious of the foul lie on which reposed the portion of her plans concerning Miss Fenton, he placed his hopes of success in a *coup de main* alone. He even proceeded to ask himself whether "le jeu," which he was playing, was really worth "la chandelle" of his time and attendance; but after a lengthened gaze at Frank's lovely and now smiling—because happy—wife, he replied to his own question that the game was worth the candle. Feeling, however, that with the turn affairs had now taken, his continued presence at Lentworth Hall was more likely to retard than to advance his views, he resolved to depart for London on the following day, which also happened to be fixed for the return of Lumley Berrington and Marcus Aubrey to Westwood.

Frank, lulled into a false security by Mrs. Leadstone's unruffled brow, and but too happy to see his beloved Juliana once more restored to serenity, had already put aside all thought of the "small establishment" which he was to "get together," for the house in Chester Place, the plate, linen, and glass, which the "disagreeable, worrying, vexing mother-in-law" had undertaken to see after, and other such details, when one morning he found on the breakfast table two letters addressed to him. They were respectively from the agent who had let him the house in Chester Place, and from Benjamin Screesman.

The purport of the first was to inform Francis P. Aylesmere, Esq., that as he had yet only signed a provisional agreement for the house in question, and as "another party" was prepared with an offer of one guinea per week more than he had agreed to give, unless the agreement itself were signed within two days of the date of present letter, he (the agent) should consider his (Francis P. Aylesmere, Esq.'s.) provisional agreement null and void, and should proceed, in the owner's

interest, to let the house for the higher sum, namely, six guineas weekly.

Screesman's letter ran thus :

——St., Covent Garden,
——th August, 186——

DEAR SIR,

I had the honour, two days ago, of receiving a visit from the Honourable Mr. Cotherstone. He delighted me by the information of your intention to return, for a time, at least, to the profession of which I have always considered you a distinguished ornament. The moment is propitious. Mr. Gainsborough (who has just left our office) is about to undertake a provincial tour, and I enclose his proposal to yourself for leading business with Miss Fenton. By-the-by, how remarkably my prophecy respecting this young lady has been verified. Whatever share you may have had in inducing her to adopt our profession, you must rejoice at your handiwork, when you see the high position she has already attained. I infer from some observations of the Honourable Mr. Cotherstone that you will find an additional inducement to recommence business at once in the companionship of *Miss Fenton*.

Your early reply as to Mr. Gainsborough's offer is desirable, and will oblige, dear Sir, yours faithfully, for Partner and Self,

BENJAMIN SCREESMAN.

While reading the second letter, Frank had placed the first before Mrs. Leadstone. Of course she chuckled inwardly at its contents, thinking to herself, "My young gentleman must now come to the point!" She was, however, not so much absorbed in it as to be rendered unobservant of Frank's satisfaction during his perusal of letter number two.

With the remark to his mother-in-law, "This is a professional letter. I won't trouble you with it—I know the subject is one you don't like," he folded the letter in question, and laid it by his plate. But Mrs. Leadstone had glanced curiously at it, while yet open, and with such success as to have read the words—underlined by the writer—*Miss Fenton*.

"If I could but get hold of that letter!" she thought.

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Juliana, who had read the house agent's letter, handed to her by her father, now asked, "Don't you think it hard on the owner of the house to lose a guinea a week—fifty-two guineas for the year?"

"Not a bit of it!" Mrs. Leadstone exclaimed. "Frank has clearly made a good bargain. He must at once sign the agreement."

"If he still means to take the 'ouse?" observed Mr. Leadstone drily.

"Which, of course, he does," pursued Mrs. Leadstone.

"Do you, Frank?" Juliana asked.

Mrs. Leadstone hastened to set her down with a sharp recommendation not to talk nonsense. Then, turning to Frank, she went on, "You must go to London this very day. You can return at night. You needn't get into your house any sooner for having signed. But there it will be for you, whenever you choose to do so."

Mr. Leadstone screwed up his mouth, and buried his head in the *Times*. He did not quite comprehend the position his wife appeared to have taken up; but he saw she had some new game in hand with respect to the moving question. He might have formed an idea on the subject, had he remarked that as (breakfast ended) Frank rose from the table, and led Juliana to a window, Mrs. Leadstone contrived to snatch up Screesman's letter, hide it in her pocket, and hurry with it from the room, saying as she did so, "Don't go away till I return, Frank." After an absence of scarcely two minutes she re-appeared, secretly dropped the letter on the floor near Frank's chair, then, pretending to have accidentally whisked it down with her ample sleeve, openly picked it up, and gave it to its owner. The owner thanked her, and put it into his pocket-book, little imagining that she had made herself mistress of its contents.

The reader, aware of Claude Cotherstone's insinuations, will not require to be told that Mrs. Leadstone would draw "confirmation strong as proof of holy writ" from Screesman's purely professional allusions to "leading business with Miss Fenton," and to Mr. Aylesmere's finding "additional inducement to recommence business at once in the companionship of Miss Fenton." Fearing that if she were to speak to Frank, she

might be unable to restrain her indignation, she rang the bell, and snatched up the *Times*, which her husband had just exchanged for a county paper.

To the footman who answered her summons she said sharply, "Mr. Aylesmere will tell you how soon he wants to be driven to the station. Take his orders to Holmes. Then tell Luttrell to come to me about dinner." After which, she was sailing majestically out of the room when Frank—having hastily dismissed the footman with the orders for Holmes—asked her whether he should see her again, as he meant to go by the 10.50 train, and so had not many minutes to spare.

"No," she replied, "I shall be busy with Luttrell. Good bye. We'll put off dinner till eight, if you think you can get back. If not, dine at your own hour."

He thanked her, saying he thought of taking an early club dinner, and having supper on his return.

"Oh! if it comes to that, why not sleep in London?"—this in a vixenish tone.

"Sleep in London, mother!" Juliana exclaimed.

"Your mother was only joking," the Squire put in apologetically; as he followed his wife out of the room, thoroughly convinced, though without knowing why, that she was not joking at all.

"Something has upset your mother," Frank observed to Juliana, when they were alone.

"It's all on account of this house, Frank. She doesn't want us to go, and yet she dislikes the uncertainty about our going. I can well understand her feeling. I myself would almost rather face a certain misfortune than be long kept in alternate hope and fear. By-the-bye, Frank, from what you said, I suppose the other letter is from"—

"My theatrical agent."

"Oh! then you really do mean to"—

"Just earn you fifty pounds a week during the next three or four months—unless you positively object to my doing it. There, dearest! Think it over while I'm away. I shall see Screevesman this afternoon. I'll ask for one day's delay in giving my answer. Now come and see me off to the station!"

To both her father and her mother Juliana related how

Frank had left to her the decision whether or not he should—for the present, at least—return to the stage.

“By all manner o’ means advise him to do it,” Mr. Leadstone said, without any *arrière pensée*.

“Of course you’ll advise him to do it,” Mrs. Leadstone equally said, but with the *arrière pensée*. “Now we shall catch him!”

Accordingly, when Frank returned that evening, Juliana told him she had been thinking over the stage question, as well as talking it over with her parents, and that she wished him to follow his own inclinations. Whatever pleased him would please her.

By the next day’s early mail Frank wrote to Screesman notifying his acceptance of Gainsborough’s proposal.

“At which of the theatres are you to perform, Frank?” Mrs. Leadstone asked, with an indifferent air.

“You know the London theatrical season is over,” he replied. “I go with my friend Gainsborough’s company into the provinces. We commence at Edinburgh.”

“Edinburgh, eh! Some hundred miles off; and how about Juliana?”

“She’ll be amused with the trip, eh, darling?”

“Very much,” Juliana answered, though rather doubtfully.

“Must she go with you as far as that? You know she’s not very strong just now.”

Thus Mrs. Leadstone, to whom the Squire replied,

“Why not? They can easily break the journey, can’t they?”

“Ha! ha! ha! The idea of *our* daughter rushing about on railways!”—Mrs. Leadstone was on the point of adding “with strolling players,” but she pulled up, and substituted, “in hot weather like this!”

The discussion which followed displayed Juliana as rather inclined than otherwise for the “trip,” Mrs. Leadstone violently opposed to her accompanying her husband “all that long way,” Mr. Leadstone apparently indifferent, and anxious to see all parties pleased, Frank himself, whatever his private thoughts, leaving the chief part of the conversation to others.

Secretly Frank now felt almost inclined to regret that he had

accepted this provincial engagement, doubting whether—the principle of family separation, which was in fact the real point at issue, having been admitted—it would not be advisable to rest satisfied with that victory, and postpone his return to the stage till he should have installed Juliana in Chester Place. This inconsistency with regard to intention and execution was a leading defect in his character. On the present occasion, however, it was not allowed long to prevail. The one individual who knew, and meant to have, what she wanted, was Mrs. Leadstone. She moved, and carried her motion—that Frank should start alone for Edinburgh, and that, by a species of compromise, Juliana should join him at a later period and at some nearer point of the tour contemplated by “my friend” Gainsborough—an expression this, by the way, which seemed generally acceptable, as throwing an amicable amateurish air over the really very serious and remunerative object of Frank’s coming departure.

It was decided that after staying at Lentworth another week Frank should leave for the North. So long as he remained, Mrs. Leadstone’s countenance ceased not to wear its most treacherous smiles. Juliana was oppressed by a tender melancholy very distressing to Frank, who now regretted that he had so far yielded to his mother-in-law as to consent to be leaving his wife at Lentworth. Observant Mrs. Leadstone detected on each countenance the feelings in each heart. As regarded Juliana, these feelings seemed to her perfectly natural; as regarded Frank, her distorted vision made them appear the result of a struggle of conscience inseparable from the situation she attributed to him.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

HEARTLY, working diligently, in London, upon an important picture for the next year’s Exhibition, received with no little surprise the intelligence—communicated in a letter from Marie—of Frank’s return to the stage. Mingled with that surprise was a vague and uncomfortable feeling which he had no difficulty in tracing to its right source—jealousy. He had

come to regard with equanimity the pretensions of Lord Fallowfield and the Vicomte, either of whom were perfectly free to marry Marie ; yet Frank, married as he was to a charming and devoted wife, caused him an uneasiness not to be dispelled by any process of mental argument. "If Frank"—thus ran his thoughts—"had never loved Marie, Marie had undoubtedly once loved Frank." From this her youthful romance she had been somewhat rudely awakened; but who could say whether the constant presence of the hero of that romance might not renew past memories, and what might not be the dangerous effect of such renewal? Not that, for a single moment, honest, confiding Heartly doubted either Marie's purity or Frank's honour; the utmost extent of the good fellow's alarm was that Frank's brilliancy might again, as of yore, throw into the shade his own plainness and simple devotion.

A proof that he did his two friends but simple justice was speedily forthcoming in the form of an invitation which he received from Frank, a month or so after the performances for the company had commenced, to meet him, and share the lodgings he had engaged at Manchester, where the company was to arrive the following week. This invitation he readily accepted, and thus we find the two re-united early in October.

The first Sunday after Heartly's arrival Frank gave a dinner party, consisting of Oldham and Marie, pretty Miss Barnstaple, Mr. Manager Gainsborough, Mr. Murwood, a writer in an influential local journal, Percy Walton, who had run down from London to see Miss Fenton make her first appearance, the following Monday, in the part of Ophelia, and Mr. Downing, the first old man of the troupe, an excellent actor, possessing almost the fine presence of the late William Farren.

Sunday is the only day—a couple of religious festivals excepted—on which the actor, when engaged in the exercise of his profession, is absolutely free ; the only day on which he feels entitled to dispose of his time as he likes—to dine at home, abroad, at what hour he likes. This is a minor social necessity peculiar to the theatrical profession, and one which tends in some degree to the isolation of its members, more than the members of other professions, from general society.

The conversation at Frank's well-spread table was inevitably somewhat "shoppy." Where will you find any party of eight persons, six of them belonging, and the remaining two, as it were, affiliated, to one profession, wherein the conversation will not turn more or less on "shop"? Much of this conversation, however, possessed a general interest for that very numerous body classified as play-goers.

The two who spoke with the greatest authority were Gainsborough and Downing, while they differed on several points in the opinions they expressed. The manager was the more practical, the actor the more prejudiced, of the two. The manager's dearly-bought experience had made him a believer in the existing order of things; the old actor was rather a *laudator temporis acti*, and disposed in favour of what people vaguely term the palmy days of the drama, without exactly knowing what date to affix to those days. On this point Murwood asked, "If Garrick's days were palmy, were those of the Kembles palmier, or less palmy?" And Downing could not answer him. Hereupon Murwood alluded to some opinions expressed by Hazlitt, and then the question shifted to contiguous ground. At the present day, it was asked, is the drama, as an art, declining, advancing, or simply stationary?

Downing thought it unmistakably on the decline. "What deterioration in the quality of the plays authors write for us!" he exclaimed. "What a paltry realism appertains to this coat-and-waistcoat school that we have borrowed from the French! Why, I don't suppose you can find half a dozen actors, among the rising men, who know how to wear a sword."

"Or take snuff!" added the manager, laughing, for "taking snuff" in the old lordly style was one of Downing's strong points.

Frank, who really did know how to wear a sword, and to use it too, since fencing had formed part of his foreign education, replied that the realism Mr. Downing complained of had, in fact, prevailed longer than he seemed to imagine; for in those "palmy days" men wore swords off as well as on the stage, so that then the sword became an integral part of the stage gentleman, just as did—he would, for instance, say—the

single eyeglass screwed in the cheek of the modern stage swell.

Here Murwood brought the conversation back to the point from which Frank had led it, by asking Mr. Gainsborough for his opinion on the main question.

"I think," was the manager's answer, "dramatic art at least holds its own with any other art in England, and if that be admitted, it must be in a state of advancement. All art appears to me to be advancing in England. What say you, Mr. Murwood?"

"I am of your opinion," Murwood replied, "with a qualification. Perhaps not art in its highest sense, though certainly art as applied to the uses of life. The popular taste has beyond all doubt been for many years, and still is, improving—thanks mainly to the patriotic labours of the late Prince Consort, and the institutions he has left behind him."

"Oh!" said Downing dolefully, "no such extraneous aid will ever be forthcoming to our art. In other words, we can never hope to possess a national theatre, supported by a national subvention, for the formation of a school of actors, and the maintenance of a high standard of perfection in dramatic writing."

"There was a time," Gainsborough resumed, "when I was sanguine enough to hope that we might borrow—among other things from France—the noble idea embodied in the *Comédie Française* as an institution, together with the system of government theatrical subventions. Failing this, I imagined that the munificent public spirit of the country might extend itself to the national drama, and that the wealthy and influential patrons of our theatre might unite to found an institution somewhat after the pattern of the *Comédie Française* whereby some thousands a year would be assured to a first-class management, for the express purpose of cultivating the highest standard in writing and acting, without regard to the question of their remunerativeness. Of the advantage of such an institution I have always been as convinced as I at present am that we shall never possess it. We are thrown, then, entirely on our own resources for the maintenance of the standard of art. Now, it may be said that the tendency of the public taste, in all things, is to degenerate, in default of being properly led. In the case of the drama, the leaders are :

three—Authors, Actors, Managers ; and it seems to me that this triad is engaged in a perpetual struggle with the public to prevent the taste of that public from becoming debased, itself heavily clogged in such struggle with an inherent source of weakness. It trades as well as teaches. Like Doctor Muggins, it must suit its physic to its patient's taste. It has—speaking technically—to face the inevitable reckoning with Saturday's treasury ! So that, Mr. Murwood, we are placed in the following predicament. If, in our aspirations after art, we fly ever so little too high for our public, our public turns its back upon us, and we are ruined in pocket. If we consent to take a lower level, you of the press feel yourselves bound to denounce us as degrading art and vitiating the public taste."

Downing, in reply to a query put by Murwood on a much-debated subject, that, namely, of the modern system of traversing the provinces with entire London companies, replied that, in his opinion, it tended to annihilate the nurseries and schools of actors formerly existing in the provincial theatres, to destroy originality, fetter genius, and mould all acting according to a stereotyped metropolitan pattern.

Admitting that there was a good deal in what the old actor said, the manager urged that the introduction of these entire London companies, with the harmony, correctness, accurate light and shade, and the general smooth working of their performances, must inevitably tend to elevate the taste of provincial audiences, and discredit the too often crude and unsatisfactory exhibitions to which the vanity of actors and the ambition of managers had accustomed them. "The system, however," Gainsborough concluded, "is as yet too new to enable us to form a decided opinion on its tendencies. The relations of London and the provinces, in this and many other matters, are in a state of transition, owing to the revolution worked by the railway and the electric telegraph ; but my faith in my own profession, whether as regards the advantages to arise from this revolution, or on the broader ground of its claim to public support, through its adaptation to the public sympathies, remains absolutely unshaken. I find invariably a genuine, unwavering patronage extended to performances of indisputable merit.

I read in our papers (with a very few exceptions) able, independent, and trustworthy criticisms on all performances. Our chief difficulty, as managers, is to place performances of indisputable merit before the public. This is easily accounted for. Even were there double the amount of dramatic ability available that there now is, the immense number of our London theatres would still render good authors as well as good actors scarce. In those palmy days, which my old friend swears by, how many theatres were in London? Two patented with the monopoly of the legitimate drama; one in the Haymarket, a little summer theatre it was called; a few outsiders scattered far and wide. Now, their name is legion, requiring companies whose name must equally be legion. Talent of a high order commands almost its own price, by reason of the numerous bidders in the market. Do you think these bidders would be in the market if they could not rely on placing their acquisitions advantageously? Certainly not! Whence must be inferred the generally prosperous condition of the stage, viewed as a commercial undertaking—the one point, as I have shown, from which we managers are fatally condemned to view it.”

The evening was devoted to music. Marie had cultivated her voice, while retaining much of her excellence as a pianiste. She sang some duets with Frank, whose fine baritone voice was in good order. A leading feature of her performance was her rendering of Ophelia's wild pathetic snatches of song, to which she added portions of the text, thus giving, to a certain extent, a rehearsal of the part she was to play the following night. Heartly, who, sitting next to her at dinner, had been in a sort of Elysium during that meal, was like one rapt, as he witnessed this result of combined inspiration, intelligence, and power of expression.

The party having separated, Frank and Heartly remained for some minutes at the open window, through which the night air blew freshly, each silently smoking the cigar of contemplation. Frank's lodgings were in a wide road, at an extremity of the usually busy city, now still and moonlit.

Heartly was the first to break the silence. “Don't you think her Ophelia will be a charming performance?” he asked abruptly.

"Ah! you've been thinking of Marie?" said Frank. "Well, so was I. In reply to your query, I expect a great hit. Murwood told me we are certain to have one of our best and most appreciative audiences. He said, too, he had telegraphed, by special order, to two London agents that to-morrow is the first night of Hamlet. My dear old Abel, the fair Ophelia found at least one appreciative listener to-night! Did you find an equally appreciative hearer in her?"

Heartly looked mystified.

"I refer to your dinner-table conversation," Frank explained.

"Oh! Well, Frank, honestly, I fear not."

"Timid Abel! Remember fortune favours the bold. Now, in my opinion, your chances have of late considerably mended in that quarter. You don't believe me, eh? I observed you both at dinner."

"Did you? I'm afraid I made rather an ass of myself—I could not help showing my feelings. I've a notion that your excellent Perrier-Jouet loosened my tongue, and filled me with an unwonted daring. I trust I did not displease her."

"How can she be displeased at so genuine and enduring an admiration as yours?"

"It seems to me, Frank, that Marie is too much absorbed in her art to leave room for ordinary weaknesses. I sometimes imagine the habit of simulating love, I won't say hardens the heart, for nothing could harden Marie's heart, but deadens within her the faculty of loving."

"Oh! no. Marie is of a loving nature. The faculty may be dormant, but it will never be dead within her."

Heartly felt that he would rather have heard these words from any man than from Frank, speaking, as his friend could, with such indisputable authority on the subject. Neither Lord Fallowfield nor the Vicomte, he was convinced, could or would have uttered them. As no particle of actual jealousy on Frank's account lingered in his heart, this feeling must have proceeded from the belief that Frank Aylesmere having been, and possibly still being, Marie's beau ideal of a lover, no lover of an inferior type would be capable of securing her affections. The painter's disheartening deduction from this was that Marie might, and probably would, in default of the

husband of her dreams, end by taking a mere husband of every-day life—said husband not being himself, the toiling A.R.A. *in esse*, R.A. *in posse*, but the Earl of Fallowfield with his wealth and his social importance.

Frank, seeing the gloom conjured to his friend's brow by this train of thought, resumed: "Yes, my dear old boy, I have a firm conviction that I shall one day—perhaps not a very distant day—see Marie your wife!"

"My wife, Frank! God grant you may prove a true prophet!" And Heartly, springing up, seized Frank's hand fervently.

"You see, Abel, this visit gives you an undoubted advantage over the Earl and the Vicomte, though, *entre nous*, I don't believe she gives either of them a serious thought. The little Frenchman, viewed in the light of a possible husband, she simply laughs at. As for Lord Fallowfield, well, he is Lord Fallowfield, which alone renders him to a certain extent formidable. At least it would with ninety-nine women out of a hundred. But, then, she really is the hundredth."

"You have a high opinion of Marie—not higher than she has of you, Frank. I wish I could, by reflection, appear to her clothed in some of your attractive qualities."

Frank laughed, then took a reflective pull at his cigar. Presently he said, "I'll tell you what it is, old friend; if I could exchange some of those qualities of mine which you call attractive against some of your solid ones, it might be well for both of us. But then, you see, Providence ordains otherwise!"

"By-the-bye," Heartly, who was still standing, broke in, "have you followed my advice about writing to your wife?"

"I mean to do it on Tuesday," Frank replied. "I shall then be able to tell her how Marie played Ophelia to my Hamlet. Hamlet is Juliana's favourite of all Shakespeare's plays—as it is mine—as it is of thousands."

"How long have you and Marie been acting together?"

"Very nearly seven weeks."

"And in no one of your many letters have you alluded to the fact?"

"No, I have always been reserved about Marie with Juliana. Cotherstone, who sees through women in a marvellous man-

ner, told me he perceived a readiness in Juliana to nourish some little jealousy of my past. Add to that the mortal dislike my mother-in-law has to me as well as—though Heaven knows why!—to Marie—all these things have combined to keep me silent on the subject.”

“A dangerous silence, Frank!—your old dislike to anything likely to give you trouble. Then, as for Mr. Cotherstone. Perhaps you’ll say I’m prejudiced; but he’s not exactly the sort of man I should choose for a matrimonial adviser.”

“I know you’ve never cottoned to Cotherstone—indeed, he’s not at all your style of man.”

“Honestly, he is not, Frank. I neither like him nor his reputation.”

“Well,” exclaimed Frank, rather impatiently, “that’s beside the question.”

“And it’s useless to discuss the past, since you have now decided to name Marie to your wife.”

“Oh! I shall most certainly. I’ve no doubt your advice is the right thing. Without it I should have been disposed to wait till Juliana meets us at Birmingham.”

“That’s a fortnight hence, eh?”

“Yes, then the two will renew their acquaintance, and there’ll be an end of the difficulty.”

“I trust there *will* be an end of the difficulty!” thought Heartly, who in truth entertained some doubts on the point. He was not aware that there existed any particular grounds for these doubts, but he was gifted with—over and above his native straightforwardness—a prudence which told him that there must be danger in the concealment, by a husband from his wife, of any matters relating to another woman, even under circumstances the most susceptible of explanation.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

It was the “first night” of Hamlet. The house was unusually crowded. The experienced manager read “success” at the very outset of Miss Fenton’s performance. Frank’s Hamlet he knew of old, and reposed full confidence in it.



Bouquets were not wanting; one in particular, formed of the rarest flowers attainable, was thrown from a private box, no occupant of which was visible.

The curtain had fallen on the fourth act, when a card was sent in to the manager's room.

"His Lordship," the messenger said, "would be glad to speak with Mr. Gainsborough."

"Show Lord Fallowfield in," said Mr. Gainsborough, laughing to himself, as he reflected that Heartly was in Frank's dressing room, and would inevitably meet Miss Fenton's noble admirer somewhere in the theatre. No sooner had the messenger left, than he hastily wrote on a slip of paper, "*Milord est chez moi!*" folded it, and sent it up to Marie's dressing room. "She at least may get away unseen!" he thought.

Presently the Earl screwed himself among the scenery to the manager's room, which he entered, daintily brushing away the dust and whitewash, which had settled on his coat, with his yellow kid gloves.

"How are you, Gainsborough?—how are you?—how are you?" he cried. "Glad to see you—very glad—very. This sort of thing's not new to me—know the ins and outs—ought to, at least—ought to—Don't you think I ought?—Paid enough for the knowledge—quite enough. Well, Gainsborough, you're satisfied, of course—ought to be, at least—Great hit! Great hit! I've sat out all the four acts. Never stirred from my box—came across country from my place. Drove three separate teams, sent two on the night before. Deuced queer roads I've come along, by George, I have! Worth all the trouble I've taken.—Congratulate you, Gainsborough—congratulate,"——

The manager with difficulty contrived to thrust in his word in the midst of the Earl's habitual repetitions. "Thank you,

Lord, I am satisfied, but not surprised. I knew my elia's capabilities."

Ah! by George! so did I, Gainsborough—so did I—made my mind to see her—witness her triumph, the moment I'd from Cotherstone she was going to play the part."

Was Mr. Cotherstone aware of my arrangements?"

Oh, yes he was—he was. He's aware of most things going on in most places—thoroughly wide-awake fellow,

Claude Cotherstone. He got a telegram, or got somebody else to get a telegram—some agent. Takes interest in la Fenton—great interest—all for my sake, you know, Gainsborough—all for my sake—Fellow who doesn't often do anything for anybody's sake but his own. However, the devil's not so black as he's painted."

"Your Lordship's figure of speech is not exactly complimentary to the gentleman in question."

"No, no. I'm not a complimentary man. I always speak my mind—always do, by George!"

"May I ask you to speak it on the subject—I ask this of your Lordship as having some managerial experience—of the performance of Mr. Philip Francis?"

The Earl had prepared a smile of satisfaction at the compliment implied in the request for his opinion, but his smile gave place to a frown when he learnt the matter whereon his opinion was sought.

"Oh," quoth he, "Philip Francis—you mean Francis Aylesmere. Well, Gainsborough, I should call it amateurish—don't you think it amateurish?"

"No, my Lord, that is just the one thing which it is not. His performance is thoroughly artistic."

"Ah! Indeed! Humph! Suppose you ought to know best—any how he is an amateur."

"An amateur, my Lord, who costs me fifty pounds a week—and what's more, is worth every shilling of it to my treasury."

"Ah! well, I hope for your sake you'll keep him—but between ourselves I don't believe you will."

"That's quite possible, my Lord. He acts from the love of acting."

"Ah! Indeed! Ha! ha! ha!"

"What are you laughing at, my Lord?" For the Earl had exploded into violent cachinnations, the cause of which he was for several moments unable thus to explain.

"Well, Gainsborough, I've had a hint that he acts from the love of—you mark me—the love of Miss Fenton!"

"Miss Fenton, my Lord!"

"Yes, Gainsborough—Miss Fenton—Miss Fenton—and he married to one of the handsomest women in England. Damme, Sir! I've astonished you, have I?"

"My Lord, I'm thunderstruck."

"Don't wonder at it. I was confoundedly astonished myself when I heard it—was by George!"

"So," thought the manager, "this is what has brought my Lord across country from his place, with three teams! Now who can have sent him on this fool's errand?"

The reader will have no difficulty in answering the manager's question.

"Claud Cotherstone."

Yes, that plotting personage had imagined he might add another story to the edifice of his schemes through the medium of the scandal which would arise from a quarrel between the Earl of Fallowfield and Frank Aylesmere on the subject of Miss Fenton.

"I think, my Lord, you have been completely misinformed in this matter," Gainsborough impressively said. "It is no part of my business to enter into details of this nature, as regards the ladies and gentlemen who form my company; but in the present instance we are speaking of persons in whom I take an interest quite out of the common. You know—or ought to know—that Mr. Aylesmere and Miss Duhamel—to give them their right names—are friends of many years' standing. Their relations are those of brother and sister—nothing more. Of that I give you my word of honour."

"The devil you do!" Fallowfield cried doubtfully. "Very odd! Very odd! Why, the thing is talked of in more quarters than one—oh yes! more than one."

"Probably the story's set afloat in one particular quarter," suggested Gainsborough pointedly.

"Oh! I know nothing about that. But I should not wonder if there were to be a deuce of a row in his wife's family. Not the sort of people to stand nonsense, you know."

"I understand Mrs. Aylesmere is to meet her husband at Birmingham, where we shall be very shortly." As Gainsborough said this the stage manager came in to announce the imminent ringing up of the curtain for the fifth act.

"Pardon me, my Lord," Gainsborough said, rising, "if I ask you not to cross the stage for a few minutes. You know Ophelia appears no more."

"Oh! She's drowned. I know all about it. Fell in the weeping

brook—died chanting snatches of old tune—mermaid-like—I know all about it. Of course, you know, it wasn't likely I should ever give the legitimate at the Folies, but I know all about Hamlet's tragic business—gravedigger with a lot of waistcoats, skulls, and all that. You bury an empty coffin, fellows rave and fight over supposed remains."

"Just so, my Lord. Well, I had rather you should not see Mr. Francis—or rather, Mr. Francis see you—before he goes on. He might, after all that has been said on a certain subject—be at least startled by your sudden appearance. In this act Hamlet requires his full self possession."

"Ay, ay, Gainsborough. Got to kill a fellow or two—Die himself. I know all about it. Besides, you know, I know actors' peculiarities. Trust to me—trust to me. I'll lie *perdu* here, quiet as a mouse, for a quarter of an hour or so, then I'll get passed through to the front. Should like to see Francis finish—Give you my sincere opinion—I say, Gainsborough! I suppose you don't mind my having a smoke. Far enough from the stage?"

But Gainsborough did "mind" his Lordship's having "a smoke," and told his Lordship so, whereupon his Lordship discreetly replied that he quite understood it—Oh! quite understood it. Rules were rules, and ought to be observed—decidedly ought to be observed. He had learnt all about stage discipline, and had bought his instruction dearly enough—that he had! Good—Very good—He would take the newspaper, and await Mr. Gainsborough's return.

Then, Mr. Gainsborough, having left the room, my Lord threw himself back in an arm chair, and in two minutes was fast asleep.

The manager made it his first business to go up to Miss Fenton's room. He found her dressed for leaving the theatre, in the act of folding a small parcel.

"If you wish to slip away without seeing Lord Fallowfield," he said, "now is your time. I have him safe in my room for several minutes."

"Thanks for your warning, cher Directeur," Marie replied. "I'm going as soon as I have sealed this"—opening the parcel, she held up a magnificent diamond bracelet—"which I found in the middle of a most *recherché* bouquet, with these

words, 'In token of Lord Fallowfield's respectful admiration,' written in pencil."

"Lord Fallowfield may be many things that you don't like, my dear," said the manager, "not a brilliant man—not very wise, even. But there is a certain gentlemanly delicacy in all he does."

"Oh! that there certainly is," she said rather drily.

"And his perseverance is astonishing."

"It is very embarrassing, believe me!"

"I shall astonish you when I tell you what has brought him here."

"To see my Ophelia?"

"Secondly; but firstly to see—*your Hamlet!*"

"See Mr. Francis! Surely he is not going to take another theatre?"

"No, my dear, no. The fact is—ha! ha! ha!—his Lordship is—jealous of your Hamlet."

Instead of joining in the manager's laugh, as he had expected, Marie exhibited signs of unmistakable confusion.

"Hullo! What's this?" quoth the manager to himself. "Has dust been thrown in my eyes?"

As if conscious of what was passing in Gainsborough's mind, Marie hastened to say, "You may judge of the absurdity of Lord Fallowfield's notion, when I tell you that Mrs. Aylesmere was my pupil and is my intimate friend!"

Gainsborough did not quite perceive the force of the argument, and changed the subject, by asking what she meant to do about the bracelet.

"Return it," she replied calmly. "Knowing your friendly interest in me, I will tell you that I have not the slightest idea of marrying Lord Fallowfield."

"That's plain speaking, my dear. The resolution is an important one. I trust it's the result of due deliberation. Your chance is such a one as no woman can ever expect to meet with twice in her lifetime. I'm speaking, you'll observe, in *your* interests, certainly not in my own."

"I have thought of everything, my good friend, and I am quite resolved. I did once waver, I will admit; but I hesitate no longer." As she spoke, she was occupied in folding, sealing, and addressing the packet. "There! It is ready. I know I

may rely on your letting this be placed in Lord Fallowfield's hands. I'm not certain that he'll regard even this act as conclusive, and cease to pursue me. But I can do no more. I have refused him twice in the plainest terms. Some people are incurable. As for to-night, cher Directeur, we've had a success, I honestly believe it. The part is adorable, though too touching. I'm afraid I felt it too much. I shall be more self-possessed the next time. Good night."

"Good night, my dear. I speak to you, and indeed feel for you, as if you were my own daughter." And the kind-hearted manager, having escorted his valued pensionnaire to the stage-door, passed through to the front of the house, and entered his private box, to see how the last act was going.

In the meantime, a little scene of real life was being enacted in the manager's private room.

Heartly, after seeing Frank "go on" in the grave scene, not perceiving Gainsborough in his private box, thought he must be in his room, so knocked at the door of that sanctum.

Hearing a "Come in!" from within, he entered. He was stupefied at seeing Lord Fallowfield stretched in the managerial chair, rubbing his eyes and shading them from the gas light.

"I beg your pardon, my Lord!" he stammered out. "I was not aware you"—

"Mr. Heartly, by George! Don't mention it. Pray come in. Not but what you've as good a right to be in the manager's room as I have. No idea you were here—not the least—glad to see you, very glad—very—Am, by George! I came across the country from my place—longish way—infernal roads—drove three teams. Well—good first night they've had. Don't you think so? I do."

"Very good, my Lord—admirable performance."

"I haven't seen—ahem!—Miss Fenton, except from the front—suppose you have, eh?"

"Yes, my Lord, I'm staying here."

"Here—in the theatre? No, no—of course you can't mean that."

"I'm staying in Manchester, my Lord."

"Then of course you see her pretty often."

"I come to the theatre every night."

"Every night! By George, I envy you! I do, 'pon my soul—great mind to stay myself. Don't see why I shouldn't—do you?"

"Indeed, Lord Fallowfield, I would not presume"——

"Oh! of course—all right! But I say, Heartly, I've got my drag here—I told you I came in my drag. Do you think she'd like a drive? Box seat—very comfortable—wraps of all sorts—support for the back. Perhaps you'd take a front seat with us. Country not exactly picturesque—rather black, but we might get away northwards—Have a pic-nic somewhere. Dare say the Governor here could join us. Some other fellow too. Oh! by George, there's that pretty little—what's her name?—plays the *ingénues*—Barnsbury—Barnstaple—Barnstaple, that's the name!"

Heartly, unable to get in a word, was meditating a retreat, when a messenger, after knocking at the half-opened door, brought in Marie's parcel. "Beg pardon, my Lord," he said. "I was told to give your Lordship this."

"This! What on earth's *this*?"

"Can't say, my Lord; had it from one of the ladies' dressers."

"Ladies' dressers! Well, I suppose it's all right." And the Earl took the parcel.

As the messenger left the room, Heartly made a movement as if to follow him, but Lord Fallowfield exclaimed, "Oh! don't go yet, Mr. Heartly. You know we were talking about little Barnstaple——Hullo, I say, Heartly! By George, that bracelet come back"—for he had now opened the parcel—"Oh! here's some mistake. I sent it to——Hi! you fellow—Messenger! Confound him! What a hurry he's in! He's gone and left. I must see her—that I must. Oh! of course it's some mistake. She doesn't know it's value. Look here, Heartly! These are not paste. Of course one doesn't order paste for a souvenir"—showing the bracelet. "Look, now, isn't that about the right sort of thing in a complimentary way for a first night? I mean, she couldn't think a fellow shabby. It's a little ornament worth a handsome woman's accepting. Of course the Emperor of Russia gives Patti and others better things—though as far as these go not better stones. Can't be better—only five, but all first water, quite A 1.

Ordered them myself. Now, I say, don't you think there must be a mistake? I do wonder whether or not she has left the theatre yet? Hardly had time, I should think, to get dressed for leaving."

Heartly had, by dint of careful attention, comprehended the history of the bracelet; but as Lord Fallowfield had never allowed him time to answer any of the queries interlaced with the complicated net-work of his conversation, he (Heartly) did not feel called upon to say more than, "If you mean Miss Fenton, I think it is probable she has left the theatre, but I can't say for certain."

"Unless, Heartly—unless she's waiting"—the speaker had thrust the bracelet into his pocket, and possessed himself of one of his hearer's hands—"unless, I say, she's waiting—You mark me?—waiting for her escort. Ha! ha! ha! Her escort! Don't you see the point? By George, you, of all men, ought to see it!"

Heartly, finding that his Lordship now did wait for an answer, remarked that really he could not see any point.

"Very odd that, Heartly."

"What's odd, my Lord?"

"Why, Hamlet, to be sure."

"Hamlet odd?"

"No, no, no!—By George, I thought you wider awake. What I mean is that Miss Fenton is likely to be waiting for Hamlet to escort her home—of course not as Hamlet, but as Francis Aylesmere."

At this Heartly laughed outright.

"Ah, you do see the point at last?"

"I do my Lord, though I expect Miss Fenton has taken her ordinary escort—not young Aylesmere, but old Oldham."

"Oldham, Oldham! Oh! yes, silent, dried-up, ancient party—uncle, grandfather—something in the paternal line. That's all very well as far as it goes. But that's not the sort of escort I allude to. Of course you've heard about P. Francis or Aylesmere carrying it on with la Fenton?"

"Carrying what on?"

"Ha, ha! ha! that's good, by George! Why, what do fellows carry on with women? Ha! ha! ha! Spooney, to

be sure. Same as—Ahem!—other fellows have been—perhaps are, eh?” significantly pressing his hearer’s hand. “You know, I know your sentiments about the lady—as of course you know mine. We need have no secrets—You understand, don’t you?”

“Partly, my Lord, partly.”

“I’ll explain fully—Ahem! Fact is, Heartly—unless I’ve been put on a wrong scent—you and I have a common enemy. Yes, Sir, a common enemy. Now, sir, who is that common enemy? Why, sir, who but P. Francis in these playbills—Francis Aylesmere in private life! What the deuce is the man laughing at?”—for Heartly had exploded into inextinguishable laughter. “What can it be? what can it be?”

“You must excuse me, my Lord; but positively I cannot help it.”

“By George, sir, if you see things in a laughable light, I don’t! Wish I could, ’pon my soul! I’ve no wish to put myself out—get in a rage, and all that, with fellows about women. Life’s not long enough for that sort of thing; and you know if I take up this about Aylesmere seriously I”——

“Take up what?” Heartly interrupted, wishing to bring his Lordship’s maundering to an end.

“Why, this interference of Aylesmere with me and—Look here!”—again producing the bracelet—“Look here! How do you account for this? How can you account for it? If you can, sir, by George I can’t! My gardener makes me up a bouquet—none of your Covent Garden shams—all choicest flowers. In that bouquet I hide my souvenir, throw it on the stage, dodge back in the box, see her pick it up among a lot of others. As she carries it off, I fancy, like a fool, she presses it nearest her heart. What idiots men are in these cases! Well, sir, here—here is my souvenir returned! Returned, sir, without the bouquet, and also without a—No, no! She has written—here’s a note—stop a moment! Hum! short, and not very sweet”—reading—“Miss Fenton returns her thanks to Lord Fallowfield for his most exquisite bouquet, and begs to enclose a bracelet which she found in the bouquet, it having, probably been put in under a misapprehension on Lord Fallowfield’s part.’ There, Heartly! What do you think of that?”

“ My Lord, it speaks for itself. But as yet I don’t see the connexion between that answer and Frank Aylesmere ! ”

“ Don’t see it ! Come, come ! That is good ! Why, it’s all on account of him and his spooning. I certainly am surprised to find you so far from wide-awake—you staying here, too ! Quite astonishing that you don’t see she’s afraid he won’t like her to receive souvenirs from other fellows.”

“ How does your Lordship establish that ? ”

“ Establish it ! Oh ! I don’t mean that I can prove like a thing in—what’s-his-name ? ”

“ Does your Lordship mean a proposition in Euclid ? ”

“ Yes, that’s just what I do mean. But—— But——

“ Well, my Lord ? ”

“ Why, by George, you’re as bad as Gainsborough. He insists there’s nothing in the story I’ve heard.”

“ My Lord, you may be assured *story* is not a word strong enough for the occasion. Call it a lie—as black a lie as ever was invented.”

“ You two certainly ought to know better than most people. You’ve no interest, one or the other, in helping anything of the sort—you, in particular, the very reverse. Yet, Heartly, my authority is a good one. Of course I can’t give up my authority. I promised not, and a promise is a promise, you know. There’d be no end of a row if I did—no end of a row, and no mistake. Then, you know, it’s not fair to mix up a woman’s name with anything of the sort. Not at all fair, quite the contrary. You agree with me, don’t you ? On the whole, I don’t see what I’m to do—positively I don’t, Heartly.”

“ Why do anything, Lord Fallowfield ? ”

“ Confound it ! I’ve come all the way from my place—so far that, as I told you, I wanted three teams to do it. I believe I told you that, didn’t I ? ”

“ You did, my Lord ; and you think it will be impossible to drive those three teams back so far without having done something ? ”

“ Well, not absolutely impossible.”

“ You have a precedent in the King of France with his twenty thousand men.”

"Egad! marched 'em back again! Ha! ha! ha! You're a satirist in a quiet way Good point that—come well in a dialogue. But, I say, Heartly, about this bracelet, you see. Now I'll tell you what it is. She has no right to ask me to take it back—in short, I'll be hanged if I do! What on earth should I do with it? You can understand a fellow's feelings. She must have held it in her hand—though, perhaps not many minutes—hardly a minute. Well, sir, can I ever see any other woman wear the bracelet that she has held in her hand? No, no, no! I can't! I can't!"

There was in these last words a touch of nice and delicate, almost tender sentiment, which appealed strongly to Heartly's sympathy, and made him overlook all the Earl's ponderosity and prolixity. Taking his hand, he said, "If you'll be advised by me, Lord Fallowfield, you'll turn a deaf ear to all this nonsense about Miss Fenton and Aylesmere. But if you are determined to do something, do this. Tell Aylesmere himself what you have heard from others, then hear what he has to say on the subject."

"Would you really do that if you were in my place?"

"If I did anything, I would."

"But you'd prefer to do nothing at all?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Is Aylesmere the sort of man to—to—you know what I mean?"

"He's the sort of man who would rather have the opportunity of denying such an injurious suspicion, than know that it exists in your Lordship's mind undenied. One thing is possible—probable indeed. He might ask on what ground you entertain the suspicion."

"If he did, I should have to take it on myself. I would not think of saying another fellow had told me."

"But no man dreams such things, or has them revealed to him in visions. There must be a starting point. I'm quite certain Lord Fallowfield himself never entertained this most groundless idea."

"Don't think he would, Heartly. No, from all I've heard of Aylesmere, I think highly of him. Then, you know, a fellow with such a wife! A love-match, I'm told it was—not

married two years either. Really, when one comes to think of it, the thing does seem impossible; and but for the high authority I"—

"My Lord, an idea strikes me. I feel certain that an explanation with Aylesmere would effectually throw light upon the matter, provided you could steer clear of having your authority insisted upon. Now, will you—in case he should ask that—give *me*, in strict confidence, your authority?"

"But how, if he insists on *your* giving it up to him?"

"He will not. I'll answer for his not doing it."

"I think that will do, Heartly, I think that will do. You're an inventive man—you've hit upon a good middle course—I really believe you have. At all events, I'll tell you what I'll do—I'll sleep upon it. Yes, that's what I'll do—sleep upon it, and answer you in the morning. Where are you staying?"

"With Aylesmere."

"Oh, the deuce you are! That's capital. The very thing. Manage it all over a cigar and a glass of grog. I'm at the Royal—Good stables there—not a bad cook, in a plain way. I say! What's Miss Fenton's address? But never mind—they'll give it me at the door. I suppose she won't refuse to see me. I wish now I hadn't put that bracelet in. How could I know it would offend her? Ah! they're kittle cattle, are women, at the very best—no accounting for their varying moods—*varium et mutabile* we were told at Eton. By George! it's a pity fellows can't avoid them altogether! But we can't, sir, we can't. It's not intended we should—we must take them with all consequences attached. Well, now, what say you to coming with me to my box? Suppose the play's not over yet—long act the last."

Heartly consenting to the Earl's proposal, the two were passed through to the front, and remained in Lord Fallowfield's box till the fall of the curtain. At the end of the performance, Lord Fallowfield walked alone to the Royal Hotel, Heartly having promised to wait for Frank.

When the two latter reached home, they found a short note from Marie, requesting that they would call on her the next morning, to confer, she said, on a matter of importance.

Frank, who had heard of Lord Fallowfield's appearance at

Manchester, said to himself, "I should not wonder if a *dénouement* of some sort were at hand!"

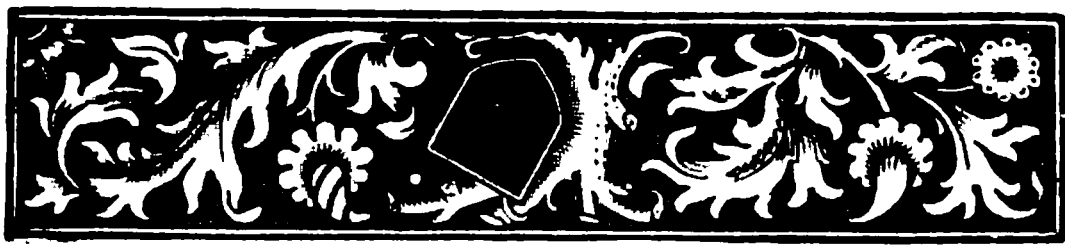
Heartly's thought was, "She's going to consult us about Lord Fallowfield. Ah! I, for one, am not able to give her a dispassionate opinion!"

(*To be continued.*)

"GWENLLIAN—A PORTRAIT."

Fair Gwenllian, thy ruddy hair
 Breaks in bright waves of burnished light,
 Showing a face as lily fair,
 A heavenly face for man's delight,
 A face, where eke the crimson rose
 Blushes, to add another grace
 And budding beauties to disclose
 Upon that pure and heavenly face.
 Fair Gwenllian, thy starry eyes
 Have straightway stol'n a foolish heart;
 If, love, to love thee, be unwise,
 Why, bid me go—in peace depart.
 Nay! Gwenllian, but bid me stay,
 Low kneeling—worship at thy shrine,
 In pity, send me not away,
 Sweet pity—Gwenllian, is divine.
 Some day—perchance, love, love may come,
 Some day—I may console thee, sweet;
 Where'er thou art—must be my home,
 My home, Gwenllian, at thy feet.
 Content to hope—content to wait
 Until love's tender buds uncloset
 In growing beauty—and kind fate
 Gives to my heart—a perfect Rose.

R. A. LEA.



SCHOOL BOARD EXTRAVAGANCE

A CITIZEN in a previous issue directed attention to the excessive salaries being paid to the teachers employed by some of our School Boards. He is, however, evidently labouring under some misconception as to the real position of educational matters in Bradford. As the right hon. gentleman who introduced the Education Bill to the House of Commons is one of the representatives of Bradford, a few particulars as to how the Act has been worked under his influence may not be uninteresting to many. Before the Act was passed the denominationalists in Bradford had provided ample accommodation for the education of their children. If that duty had been neglected by anybody it was by the very people who are impoverishing the ratepayers by the erection of palatial buildings for the use of children educated under the direction of the School Board. As soon as Dissenters could get schools erected at the cost of the ratepayers, they were not slow in availing themselves of the privilege. Those schools have been erected as rival establishments to denominational schools, and it has naturally followed that large sums of money have been expended in building them in localities where there was already sufficient accommodation. Since the passing of the Act nearly £300,000 have been borrowed on the security of the rates for School Building purposes, and thereby other burdens were imposed besides those we had undertaken for the preservation of our own voluntary schools. At the present time the expenditure of the Bradford School Board exceeds the income by twenty-six thousand pounds a year, and to provide that money it has been found necessary to add eightpence in the pound to the borough rate. That demand is more than double the sum Mr. Forster told the House of Commons would be required for School Board purposes, and yet we are still building! "A Citizen," in his very candid article, remarked

that "the example of the Bradford Board in establishing a higher school for the town is one which is not at all to be deprecated ; but the attempt of the London Board to raise the qualification of every teacher, and the standard of education for the children, has resulted in an enormous drain upon the pocket of the ratepayer, and no appreciable increase in educational results." The latter part of the argument applies as strongly to Bradford as it does to London ; but with regard to the former, "A Citizen" seems to be unaware of the fact that when Mr. Forster opened the Warmingham Higher School a few weeks ago there were already four Higher Board Schools within the borough. During the past year those schools have been used for the education of the children of the middle and upper classes who formerly patronised private schools, and after taking into account all the income and expenditure there is a dead loss on the year to the ratepayers to the tune of £1,500. This in the main arises from the limitation of the school fee at nine-pence ; but as Higher Board schools were not contemplated by the Act, why should not the fees in such schools be increased to something like a fair sum according to the education given ? Bradford takes the credit for having a most efficient and elaborate municipal arrangement, besides being possessed of a magnificent Town Hall. The salaries of the whole of the officials, including town clerk, but excluding ordinary policemen, amount to about £16,500 a year. The Corporation has been considered a costly institution, but for salaries according to numbers it is not to be compared to the School Board. Last year the salaries of the teachers employed by the Board amounted to no less a sum than £15,485 5s. 11d. Whoever, in Bradford, imagined 10 years ago that an educational machine like this would spring up, and that the burgesses would have to pay nearly sixteen thousand pounds a year for teachers ? The whole arrangement is wrong. It was never contemplated by the Bill when it was, through the House of Commons, laid before the country. If such an elaborate scheme had even been hinted at in the debates there are good grounds for believing that Mr. Forster would have failed to upset the opposition which would have been brought to bear against it.

W. H. HATTON.

THE THEATRE.

THERE is no longer any want of *pabulum* as regards theatrical criticism. All the houses have been dusted, and all the curtains have gone up. The difficulty has been to find the time to see everything at once.

The weather seems to have affected everything on both sides of the Channel, for the novelties on the Paris stage are not a whit more successful than those in London. At present, save *Jonathan* at the Gymnase, played in a most consummate fashion by St. Germain and Lolotte, and *Le Petit Abbé* at the Vaudeville, in both of which Céline Chaumont fascinates all who see and hear her, there are no fruits but Dead Sea apples. *La Venus Noire*, about which so much ink has been wasted in the Parisian press, and by which so many instructive lessons of geography, ethnology, and practical discovery were to be given, is a crude combination of aimless scenes, in which positive ignorance of the country, and direct aberration from known data, produce a moral nightmare, where nigger ballets from Philadelphia, oxen from Hindostan, Bactrian camels and Persian greyhounds, with a Brazilian monkey and an English governess thrown in by way of local colour, join with French chauvinism to make confusion worse confounded.

At another house English Pantomime (represented by Hanlon-Lees), adapted to French comedy, is drawing all Paris. There is a scene in a section of a sleeping car from which much fun is elicited; a screaming chase by *Douaniers* after servants, who have secreted brandy and cold chicken through all the compartments and over the roof, down the lamp-hood and up the funnel; the shifts to which a newly-married couple are put to get a wink of sleep, and the final explosion of the engine, with the smashing-up of all the carriages, form one of the liveliest pieces of absurdity yet produced by pantomime on any stage. This is *Le Voyage en Suisse* so much talked about, which has driven little Chaumont to seek the hospitality of the Vaudeville.

Here in London there is no great decided success yet. At the Adelphi a foolish *rechauffé* of old melodramas tacked onto a scene called "sensational," representing a harrowing accident, or what might have been an accident, to an express train of a locomotive and carriage—size, some three feet by two. At the Court Theatre, now under Mr. Wilson Barrett's guidance, Victorien Sardou's *Fernande* met with such a chilling reception as to necessitate its withdrawal before these lines will appear in print. The piece was principally remarkable for a magnificent Japanese boudoir, which was very nearly excellent, and only wanted a little more knowledge of Japanese art to have been perfection. Mr. Charles Coghlan has not improved during his stay in America, and Miss Heath was too much occupied with the *ménage* of her dress to devote sufficient thought to her words. The piece is an unpleasant piece, and ought never to have been done into English.

At the Lyceum the popular Henry Irving has produced that melancholy drama, *The Iron Chest*, about which enough has been written lately to fill the largest ever constructed. There is no denying that the part suits the actor, but there is no female interest in the play, and we cannot think it is destined to run.

The new St. James's Theatre has been opened with drums and trumpets, and colours flying, flying all over the place. We could have wished that the decorations so well commenced in the Hall had been carried through the passages and into the house. The combination of colours in the auditorium is not happy, and there is not that richness of style, nor elegance of execution, in the furniture and upholstery of the house which we might have reasonably expected from so good a management. The curtain, however, rises on an interior which is a great improvement on any set we have yet seen in London. There is so much care in the artistic work and appointments that we are surprised to detect a Louis seize table figuring among the furniture. The picture of *Monsieur le Duc* is certainly not worth its setting. Putting aside an objection which has been made at the idea of a father making illicit love to a girl who turns out to be his own daughter, the part of the fascinating and seductive Richelieu, '*premier gentilhomme de la chambre*' to his Majesty Louis the Fifteenth of France, certainly does not find a

representative in Mr. Hare. The honours fall to Miss Grahame, who has only to unlearn a provincial tendency to exaggeration to become a great addition to the London stage.

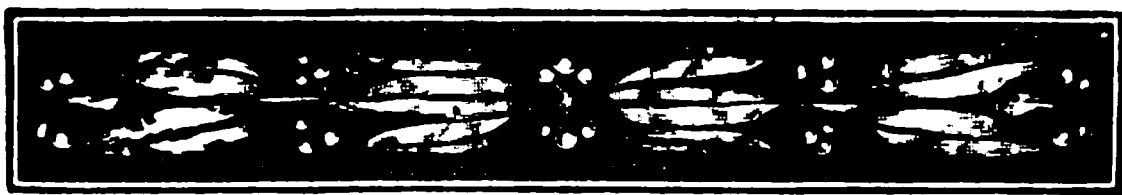
In the *Queen's Shilling* Mr. Hare is at home as the Colonel, a British martinet who with all his strict discipline and military etiquette is still under the impression that he is sufficiently attractive to win ladies' hearts and captivate an heiress. The part could not be better played. The rigid demeanour, irreproachable make-up, and testy temper, aggravated by the insolence of the young Lancer, his rival, attain the highest perfection in the *ensemble* here represented, and the piece is well worth seeing for the second act alone. All concerned, Mr. Kendal, and his talented wife, Mrs. Gaston Murray, and Mr. Terriss, play well into each other's hands. The scene, though verging on caricature, is very amusing, and produces hearty laughter.

At the Alhambra an opera of Lecocq's has been produced, which might have been allowed to join oblivion in France, where it is almost already forgotten and not likely to be revived. The plot is extremely feeble, and what there is of story is so enveloped in fog that the lights of Messrs. Reece and Leigh do not succeed in more than indicating an outline. There is a Countess in different disguises, who, however, has only to retire for a minute into the Hôtel de Ville to re-issue in her own robes, attended by four ladies of honour kept on the premises for the Countess's use. There is an officer of Musketeers who takes leave of his regiment when he pleases, in order to appear as a butcher-boy with a comic calf's head. There is a tavern keeper's pretty wife, who wishes to fight everyone, and her husband who has no wish to fight at all; and there is a very pretty ballet, in which Rigadoon is danced to the prettiest music of the piece. Miss Constance Loseby is at her best in the Countess, and sings the scena "Quaking, shaking," &c., with great effect. Miss Emma Chambers is as pert and clever as usual, baring her bonny little biceps on every opportunity as the pugnacious Madame Taboureau. Miss Alice May sings and acts better than she has ever yet done, in the part of a butcher's wife, but what she has to do with the piece is by no means as clear as her

voice. Mr. Leslie makes a very good *débüt* at this house, and will be a useful addition to the company. He wants an electrical spark to quicken his pulses, but he looks well in his costume, and plays in the disguise of a butcher's lad with much humour. Mr. Paulton has returned, and though we always feel as if we were assisting at a funeral oration whenever he speaks, he has admirers at the Alhambra who receive him with applause. His speech after running away from the troops is the best thing he does. There is no denying that the opera is dull in the extreme. Two or three good numbers, one after the manner of Offenbach, sung by Miss Alice May, one reminding us of Madame Angot, sung by Miss Loseby, and the scena already referred to, are all that are worth noting. The piece was not a success in Paris ; it is therefore difficult to understand the management being successful which wilfully takes up a piece already received with just coldness by the city of Opera Bouffe. The fact of there being a barricade built up on the stage in sight of the audience will not make it a good piece any more than Mr. Boucicault's toy railway trains will elevate that contemptible drama *Rescued* to a place in stage literature.

At the Prince of Wales's the Bancrofts have produced Mr. Albery's version of *Les Bourgeois de Pontarcy*, under the title *Duty*, with a certain success. The piece is too evidently improbable, as no son would be so ridiculous when by a little aid from his experienced uncle he might arrange matters so easily, as regards his father's peccadilloes ; but I am glad to see that Mr. Conway makes a distinct step upwards. Time is bringing him experience, and with experience more tenderness, and a power more earnest than he has shown as yet. It would be a pity, when Nature has been so bountiful in giving him good sense, if he neglected to force Art into giving him all other re-
 ents. Miss Linda Dietz, as her acting at the Haymarket
 l, is very charming and intelligent. Mrs. John Wood
 all her love of fun and humour into play, and is deci-
 ne most remarkable among the excellent actors enlisted.
 thur Cecil as usual fills the character he plays with
 nature, and produces a picture not likely to be for-

THESPIS.



THE HAUNTED WELL.

A LEGEND OF BRITTANY.

Cloisters of the lonely dead,
By the sea, by the sea.
Green trees waving overhead,
Priorie, Priorie.

Crumbling arches, ruin'd walls,
Mem'ry of the past recalls,
By the sea, by the sea,
Priorie.

Stands a well of flint-stone grey,
By the sea, by the sea,
Hawthorn sweet and scented May,
Priorie, Priorie.

Apple pink, and snowy pear,
Blossom in an orchard fair,
By the sea, by the sea,
Priorie.

On the well shines out the cross,
By the sea, by the sea,
Sin forgiving and remorse :
Priorie, Priorie.

Lichen grey and ivy green
Seek the scars of Time to screen,
By the sea, by the sea,
Priorie.

Monks were chaunting midnight mass,
By the sea, by the sea,
When across the dewy grass,
Priorie, Priorie,
Gliding stealthily one came,
Bowed with sorrow and with shame.
By the sea, by the sea,
Priorie.

In the shadow of the well,
 By the sea, by the sea,
 Chaste cold moonbeams on her fell,
 Priorie, Priorie.

Wan and pale her lovely face,
 Waits she at the trysting place
 By the sea, by the sea,
 Priorie.

"O! wind, in the copse astir,"
 By the sea, by the sea,
 "Is my true love far or near?"
 Priorie, Priorie.

"Brave men act where women weep,"
 Alain swore his oath to keep.
 By the sea, by the sea.
 Priorie.

* * * *

Dawned the wedding morning right
 By the sea, by the sea;
 Yvonne deck'd in virgin white,
 Priorie, Priorie.

At the altar takes her stand,
 Sir Jehan in his clasps her hand,
 By the sea, by the sea,
 Priorie.

"Will Sir Alain keep his oath?"
 By the sea, by the sea,
 "Keep or break his plighted troth?"
 Priorie, Priorie.

Incense rises, as a cloud;
 Hark! what means that war-cry loud?
 By the sea, by the sea.
 Priorie.

"Gird you ready for the fray,"
 By the sea, by the sea.
 "Arm, Sir Jehan de Penhoüet,"
 Priorie, Priorie.

"Lo! our wedding dawns in strife,
 May it set in joy, sweet wife!"

By the sea, by the sea,
Priorie.

Stooped his farewell kiss to take,
By the sea, by the sea.
Never word that lady spake,
Priorie, Priorie.

Clasped the collar of his hound,
Loose the dog broke with a bound,
By the sea, by the sea,
Priorie.

Until set of sun they fought,
By the sea, by the sea,
Victory is dearly bought,
Priorie, Priorie.

In the field of buckwheat red,
Stabbed, the victor lieth dead,
By the sea, by the sea,
Priorie.

His good hound doth wailing howl,
By the sea, by the sea.
Keeping watch with brooding growl,
Priorie, Priorie.

And by wild beast torn and slain
Lies his brother Sir Alain,
By the sea, by the sea,
Priorie.

Woe ! woe ! to Yvonne the Fair,
By the sea, by the sea,
Widow's coif hides yellow hair,
Priorie, Priorie.

Slowly winter wanes to spring ;
Will Time peace and comfort bring ?
By the sea, by the sea,
Priorie.

Doth she mourn the brothers twain ?
By the sea, by the sea,
Mourn her husband or Alain ?
Priorie, Priorie.

Neath her veil the widow'd bride
Seeks her 'tear-stained' face to hide,
By the sea, by the sea.

Priorie !

Monks are chaunting midnight mass
By the sea, by the sea,
Slowly o'er the dewy grass,
Priorie, Priorie,
Wearily a woman wends,
O'er a sleeping infant bends,
By the sea, by the sea.

Priorie.

Softly crooning " Lullaby ! "
By the sea, by the sea.
" Lullaby ! the well is nigh,
Priorie, Priorie,
" Lullaby—my baby, sleep,
Silent is the well and deep,"
By the sea, by the sea.

Priorie.

" Sleep, my baby, sleep," she sings,
By the sea, by the sea,
Then on high the bucket swings,
Priorie, Priorie.

Creaks the windlass, hark ! a splash,
Moonbeams on a bright steel flash,
By the sea, by the sea,
Priorie.

" Alain sweet ! Love's tryst I keep,"
By the sea, by the sea,
" Silent is the well, and deep,"
Priorie, Priorie.

Near the copse of budding May,
Prone upon the earth she lay,
By the sea, by the sea,
Priorie.

Yellow tresses, drenched with dew,
By the sea, by the sea,

Round her face a glory threw,
Priorie, Priorie.

And the cross in shadow shone
On the brow of dead Yvonne,
By the sea, by the sea,
Priorie.

* * * *

Ruined chancel, grassy floor,
By the sea, by the sea,
With red creeper trailing o'er,
Priorie, Priorie.

Broken niches, empty shrines,
Starry jessamine entwines,
By the sea, by the sea,
Priorie.

One fair tomb unbroken stands,
By the sea, by the sea.
Armed knight with crossed hands,
Priorie, Priorie.

At his feet his trusty hound,
As in life, in death is found,
By the sea, by the sea,
Priorie.

"Messer Jehan de Penhoüet,"
By the sea, by the sea,
"Y ! pour son alme priez,"
Priorie, Priorie.

"Avè Marye, Icy gist
Qui laachement fust occis."
By the sea, by the sea,
Priorie.

Of the tomb of Sir Alain
By the sea, by the sea,
Not a vestige doth remain
Priorie, Priorie.

But the Breton legends say
Yvonne haunts the well this day ,
By the sea, by the sea,
Priorie.

E. A. LEA.



DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 11.

Of being so lovely she now sees the worst ;
Her name is now quoted from second to first.

I.

"Very like a . . ." this won't do !
Not *I* must say the word, but *you*.

II.

Weak fools who thought, cribb'd, cabin'd, and confined,
Here to detain the "Master of Mankind."

III.

That this word is French we must surely opine ;
Yet we find it in Shakespeare *four times in one line*.

IV.

'Tis either *this*, or else 'tis *that* ;
In fact 'tis simply "*this*" for "*that*" !

MARS.

SOLUTION OF DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 10.

T	ittleba	T
O	uid	A
W	hee	L
N	ic	K

Light 3. Wheel of Fortune, commonly called the "Wheel."

Correct answers received from—What, Never ? ; La Belle Alliance ; Shark ; Beolne ; Black Beetle ; Brevette ; Quite a Young Thing Too ; Nursery ; Lalla Rookh ; P. V. ; Alcestis ; Victor You Go ; Albatross ; and Benedictine. 14 correct and 37 incorrect. Total, 51.

MESOSTICH No. 11.

A very short and most simple word,
Commonly said to an anserine bird.

I.

"Leave it to you, Sir," really sounds most willing ;
But, as a rule, just means an extra shilling.

II.

Who knocks at your door with the water hot,
And makes you exclaim, "You go and be shot" ?

VENUS.

SOLUTION OF MESOSTICH NO. 10.

pa P er

sum M ons

Correct answers received from—Victor You Go ; Nursery ;
Cetewayo ; P. V. ; Der Teufel ; Beolne ; Tottie ; Shark ; La
Belle Alliance ; Alcestis ; Black Beetle ; Brevette ; and Alba-
tros. 13 correct and 34 incorrect. Total, 47.

ACROSTIC AND MESOSTICH RULES.

I.—Each number of the *St. James's Magazine* will contain a Double Acrostic and a Mesostich.

II.—In *each* competition Three Annual Prizes, in money (1st prize twenty-five guineas, 2nd prize ten guineas, 3rd prize five guineas), will be awarded to the three most successful solvers.

III.—Special competitions will be held for guessing off ties (if any).

IV.—Prize-winners will be required to furnish their names and addresses for publication.

V.—The same solver may win prizes in both competitions.

VI.—Only *one* word can be accepted as the solution of each light.

VII.—Answers addressed to "The Acrostic Editor," 5, Friar Street, Ludgate Hill, E.C., must be posted in time to be received by the first post on the 10th of each month, or on the 11th, if the 10th falls on a Sunday.

VIII.—In accordance with the wishes of numerous Subscribers, the Acrostic and Mesostiches for March, June, September and December will be in French.





St. James's Magazine.

DECEMBER, 1879.

HUBERT MAITLAND'S WRAITH.

A NOVEL.

By FELIX HOLLAND.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A RED-LETTER DAY FOR OTLEY.



HIS was a red-letter day in the annals of Otley-on-Surf. Miss Aldair, from London—Miss Aldair, granddaughter of old Crabtree Aldair, as the villagers called him—was about to be married. Few of the inhabitants knew anything of the bride elect, none of them had so much as seen the coming bridegroom. But a wedding was a wedding after all, especially when the bride was a great heiress from London, the bridegroom a very golden calf, the *gentry* for miles around invited, and the bellringers retained for the day at two and sixpence a-piece.

But this was not all: there was to be a funeral as well, and there had been evoked a no inconsiderable amount of slander and ill-feeling by the obstinacy of the Aldairs, who refused to defer the wedding a day in order to make decorous way for the more sacred and imperative ceremony. The difficulty was eventually vanquished by the Rector, who insisted on the funeral taking place at a very early hour on the morning pre-arranged.

But the wonder of wonders was that Hubert Maitland, whom everybody had believed dead these thirty years, and whose wraith for long afterwards haunted the churchyard, had turned up again, not in his ghostly but in his social and

mundane capacity. And it was said he was more wealthy than the rich old Crabtree Aldair and his merchant son. And even this was not all: it was whispered that the woman whose body was to-day to be brought from London was the veritable daughter of Philip Clark, of the Hillside Farm—pretty Bessie, the child who all the world believed burned to death on the memorable occasion of the last authentic appearance of Hubert Maitland's wraith. And certain it was they had dug her grave side by side with that of the farmer's wife, as anybody might see if he would only take the trouble.

Then, again, there was the dead woman's brother, young Philip Clark, whose advent a month ago was now an almost forgotten theme; he, too, would be there, of course. So there was no end of wonders crowding into one brief autumn day.

How these things could be was no part of bucolic concern. They, honest Christian people, had been accustomed, thank God, to take things for granted. If everybody said a thing was so, then a thing must be so, and only crotchety fools would set up their own opinion against that of twenty others equally qualified to know.

The village street was thronged from end to end. Every door and window was full of eager faces. For the bell was tolling and the funeral *cortège* was already in sight. Slowly, slowly it drew near, and passed—there was only one mourning carriage, and the blinds were down. So the idlers stole across the fields to the church, and were there before it.

Many were the grey heads reverently bowed as they saw the coffin borne down the aisle, while the massy walls dumbly echoed the solemn words of the burial service, but none so white and venerable as that of the broken old man who leant, tottering and trembling, on the arm of young Philip Clark. There were some who could remember him in the strength and vigour of youth—he could not now be sixty, yet there were men of eighty and ninety among them who looked younger than he. Soon the service was over, the crowd silently gathered at the new-made grave heard the gravel rattle on the coffin lid, lingered awhile in whispering scattered groups, then followed the mourning carriage as it lumbered away, and mother and daughter slept together at last.

The cumbrous vehicle was yet visible on the white

roadway climbing the brow of the hill, and the sexton was alone at the grave shovelling in the damp bony earth, when the bells rang out a joyous peal, laughing at all the death and sorrow in the world. Again the old church was filled with curious faces, and bride and bridegroom marched up the aisle over whose ancient lettered flags but an hour ago the dead was borne.

Who thinks of death and sorrow now? Out, ye ugly, inopportune troublers of a day of joy! Here is the bride in her beauty, and the bridegroom in his pride, and the bridesmaids fair and smiling, and the great merchant father so portly and pompous, and a host of fine young ladies and gentlemen from all the country round.

Yet somehow nobody looks particularly happy. The eyes of the beautiful young bride are full of tears, and her cheeks are white as the waxen flowers she carries. The bridegroom, too, looks worn and haggard, despite his assumed nonchalance. The bridesmaids are cold and artificial as the figures on the wedding cake. Mr. Aldair alone appears content, but such faces as his were not intended to show well at a wedding. Somehow weddings mostly do look sad.

And then that horrid knell which had been tolling over all the hills and valleys near the livelong morning was enough to cast a gloom over the young people. But what of that? Should Mr. Aldair's daughter's marriage be delayed because some desperate outcast choose to die? So the Rector turned back three leaves of the great prayer-book and went on with the ceremony.

His Reverence had proceeded as far as that challenge to the congregation which no Reverence ever expects to hear answered, when a tall old man came striding up the chancel and halted with military precision at the bridegroom's side.

"Ye canna go on wi' the sairvice, minister," said the uninvited wedding guest.

The bridegroom turned sharply round. The blood left his face, and he put out his hands half imploringly, half menacingly, towards the intruder.

"Kannyman!"

At the touch of those hands on the old man's shoulder all the pent-up wrath of years burst into action. He

shook off the bridegroom's appealing touch, and grinding out a fierce, implacable curse, with one stroke of his great fist he felled him down. Ere yet the astonished people had time to ask what was the matter, two strangers, wearing the uniform of the London police, stepped over the prostrate bridegroom, and clasped a pair of handcuffs on his wrists.

"In the name of Her Majesty the Queen, I arrest this man on the charge of murder."

"Murder!" The congregation caught the word, and men and women with white faces whispered it on from one to another till it hissed and muttered in the echoing roof: murder!

"Hush!" said the clergyman pointing to the bride, who stood holding on to the communion rail. But she had heard the awful whisper, and without a sigh or a groan she sank on the altar steps, and like the bridal veil which descended over her sorrowing face, the hovering angels let fall oblivion over her broken heart.

No joy bells rung that autumn night over the silent landscape. Neither music nor mirth was heard in Aldair's house by the moaning river's side. No wedding guests were gathered at his prodigal table; bride and bridesmaids and wedding guests had all vanished away like a dream. The flowers hung fading in the darkness, the servants were huddled whispering round the kitchen fire, and at every awful pause they heard the night-wind moaning in the poplar boughs to the moaning river below.

Meanwhile in the churchyard up the hill a little band was gathered around a new-made grave, and many flowers from stranger hands were dropped upon the turf, and once or twice a tear from stranger eyes. The dead find kindred every where: only the living are utterly alone and forlorn.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A PARAGRAPH FROM A NEWSPAPER.

THREE months Pearl has slept in her quiet village grave, and the grass is growing fresh and green under the Christmas snow.

But there are no signs of Christmas at Curtice House. The blinds are down in all the windows, and straw is strewn over the frozen road. For Mr. Aldair—Aldair the portly, the robust, the proud—lies sick in his chamber. For many weeks his life has been despaired of by his daughter, two doctors, and a nurse. His good constitution, however, stood the racket, and he is at last out of danger. So now he lies dozing, while a hired nurse and the chambermaid are whispering in the corner of the room, his only companions.

“Is he asleep?” asks the latter.

“’Es, Dearie—’e is asleep, by the way ’e allers do scowl in ’is sleep; so if you will pass me that bottle—you won’t ’ave a sup?—No?—then sit down and read the account.”

The chambermaid draws a crumpled paper from her apron and reads—

“Yesterday morning, punctually at eight o’clock, Abraham Moss, who was convicted at the last Sessions for the murder of his child, suffered the extreme penalty of the law at Newgate. Owing to the high social position of the culprit and the romantic manner of his arrest, an unusually dense mob gathered in the Old Bailey to witness the execution. As early as two a.m. groups of roughs and working-men had taken up their position opposite the scaffold, and by six o’clock the roadway was one sea of upturned faces from Ludgate Hill to St. Sepulchre’s Church. There was the usual manifestation of brutality, coarse jests, and ribald songs, keeping up the spirits of the sightseers in the absence of the drink it was impossible to obtain. At seven o’clock a rumour got abroad that the murderer had been reprieved, and the entire mob became livid with rage and disappointment. The report was, however, unfounded, and precisely as St. Sepulchre’s clock was striking eight, the prisoner stepped on to the fatal drop. He was ghastly pale, and trembled so violently that he had to be supported by Calcraft, or he would have fallen. A loud yell of indignation burst from the struggling crowd as the black cap was drawn over the culprit’s eyes, then it hushed itself to a profound silence as it listened to catch the peculiar dull thud of the drop. Calcraft drew the deadly bolt, and Abraham Moss went to swell the lists of the Newgate Calendar.”

"Is that all, dearie? Isn't there nothing more?" asked the nurse disappointedly.

But before her companion could reply they were startled by a low moan. Mr. Aldair was sitting up in his bed; he had awakened at the first sound of the chambermaid's shrill voice and heard all that passed. The invalid glared malevolently at the attendants, but he was so weak that he could only falter out his daughter's name, and fall back on his pillow.

In a few moments Emily softly entered and threw herself on the bed beside her father, kissing his harsh, haggard face with such unfeigned tenderness that had the great merchant possessed a heart as large as a pin's head he could not have turned away so sullenly as he did. Ah! well spakest thou, true poet of our daughterland—

"No one is so accursed by fate,
No one so utterly desolate,
But some heart, though unknown,
Responds unto his own."

Pause and take a lesson here, my stern, selfish unlovable brother mortal. Who but a child could love such things as you? I will give thee a bit of advice, my self-saturated brother—make haste to marry, yea, marry forthwith, and beget sons and daughters. You can easily find a woman with sufficient money to support them. If not, still marry, and bear the expense yourself. It will not cost you much if you get a woman of a good housekeeping family, and with such as you for a husband ten to one she will die as soon as you grow tired of her; and then some day, when the world's scorn and hate are pouring on your head, loving arms will twine around your neck, and filial kisses warm your flinty face. Look, I say, at Aldair and his daughter, and marry at once. You cannot possibly live by the bargain, for you will exact all and give nothing in return. Believe me, you are just the sort of man to make good wives and daughters happy.

"Emily, girl, why do you trouble me by crying thus—be a woman," said Aldair petulantly. Yet his manner was certainly less harsh than formerly. Ah! had Aldair only been blessed with a long illness in his youth, who knows but he might have been a better man. Let us pity the unfortunate healthy and

prosperous whom suffering and adversity have never taught to pity others. They have missed one of the luxuries of life.

"An old blind man and a young one, sir," said the footman, softly entering with a note. "Waiting for an answer, sir."

Aldair tossed the letter carelessly to Emily: with a little trembling she broke the seal and read falteringly—"Honoured sir,—I have become aware of a secret attachment between my ward and your—daughter."

"What!" cried Aldair, "Emily, am I dreaming?"

The door opened as he spoke, Emily turned, and, uttering a little involuntary cry of joy, she dropped her father's hand and leapt half fainting into her lover's arms.

"Ah!" cried Aldair contemptuously, "*you*, sir, is it? How dare you come here, sir, an impostor, a beggar?"

"Good sir," said the musical voice of old Hubert, "the lad is no beggar. I am an old man, and ready to die, and all I have is his. If ninety thousand pounds——"

"Ha!" cried the sick man, springing up from his bed, "ninety thousand, did you say? Give me your hand, sir, And—Emily, child, show your friends into the dining-room—excuse me, sirs, I am tired and ill, but you are very welcome—very welcome."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

HIGH JINKS AT CURTICE HALL.

It was a happy Christmas Eve at Curtice House after all. The princely drawing-room, with its sumptuous furniture, its pictures, statuettes, its gilded walls, and frescoed ceilings, looked chilly and empty at first; the superfluous numbers of vacant chairs gave the place a forlorn appearance, as if they were waiting, uncomfortably anxious, for their wonted Christmas guests from the city. And the great fat ottomans would be standing in everybody's way, jogging elbows, t ripping up unwary feet, plucking sleeves as if they wanted to ask when the old gentlemen with the red noses were coming. Then the mirrors, glaring and staring you out of countenance at every turn, or showing your own reflection so far away in the chilly dis-

tance—and the heavy chandelier hanging like a stalactite cave roof overhead, threatening at every sound and motion to come crashing down a vitreous avalanche,—it was not a cheerful house by any means at first.

How was it possible for a pair of lovers and an old blind man to make a merry Christmas in such a home? No, they were not merry; but they were what is better—happy, content. And when, by-and-bye, Emily's cousin Mary Cotton dropped in, and the gas was lit, and the big fires blazed up, and Emily's little brothers and sisters were brought down from their nursery prison, and children's laughter and prattle were heard for the first time in the reception-rooms of Curtice House, mingling with Philip's songs and Mary Cotton's music, old Father Christmas would not have looked altogether out of place had he stepped out of the children's story books and sat down for an hour at the rich merchant's hearth.

Talk about mythical personages and they will appear. Here is Father Christmas himself with his jolly red face and snowy coat, wiping his great feet in the hall. No, it is only Ebenezar Scroggs, and look there is Dick—one-eyed Dick Gadaway—behind him, wiping his feet too. Show them up Thomas de la Plush, show them up—anybody is welcome at Curtice House to-night who comes with guileless heart, and honest hands; show them in—worse men than these have sat at Aldair's Christmas fires. Right welcome are you, honest friends, to-night.

“They told me ta laddie wor here, an' dom me, here un is!” cried Ebenezar, as he smothered his *protégé* in his snowy arms. “And who have we here?—the very individual lark-tongued lassie as used to go a-readin' furren lingo, on dher the trees. Ahem! God bless thee, Miss. And, by the Lord, here is Mr. Greatcloak too. How dost do, Greatcloak? Dom me, its' a strange world this—there's more miracles than nature in it.”

Emily stopped Mr. Scroggs's reflections with a bumper of wine. But Mr. Gadaway could not be so easily silenced, for, notwithstanding Ebenezar's remark as to the comparative scarcity of nature, she had shown herself so prodigal to Dick in the matter of nose as to quite preclude the possibility of his

drinking out of any measure of smaller circumference than a quart pot. He put aside the wine with a laugh, and dropping on a footstool among the children, was soon noisily engaged at "Ride a cockhorse to Banbury Cross," accompanying his homo-equine exercise with all sorts of grotesque rhyming nonsense which sent the little folks into ecstasies of delight.

"That's Dick's normal occupation," explained Emily. "It isn't long," added the young lady roguishly, "since Dick used to jump me the same way. You will get nothing out of our Dick till the children have gone to bed."

This was fast becoming a consummation devoutly to be wished, for bed-time was already passed, and now the obstreperous mirth was likely to do them more harm than good; so Emily, who was of late insensibly assuming the duties which could not be satisfactorily filled by her valetudinarian mamma, quietly insisted on their nurse being sent for.

"Now Dick will sing us a song," said Philip, as soon as the children were gone. But Dick had already overtaken his vocal powers, and could not possibly sing a note till he had gone into the kitchen and had a pipe.

"No, you shall not leave us!" exclaimed the little mistress of the house. "Here, Thomas, run into the kitchen and fetch Mr. Gadaway's pipe and tobacco jar."

Exit he of the plush with a sniff and a toss, and a mental resolve to give warning next week if master did not get well and put a stop to this disgraceful vulgarity.

The pipes and tobacco were nevertheless forthcoming, and soon Dick Gadaway and Ebenezer Scroggs were quietly smoking a couple of long churchwardens in the *sanctum sanctorum* of Curtice House. Alas! O mighty magnet of Bellhaven-street—thou pattern and paragon of Plutocratic pomposity—that it should ever come to this!

Then, while the two old fellows were solemnly fumigating Aldair's furniture, while cousin Mary was dreamily playing a sonata, and Philip and Emily, ensconced in a snug corner of the hearth, were talking in a low earnest undertone of something which no mortal but themselves would ever know, old Hubert, who all the evening had sat thoughtfully over the fire, started up, and bent his white head listening.

"Who called me?" he asked.

"No one called, father," said Philip, gently leading him back to his chair.

The old man resumed his listless attitude.

Suddenly he again rose and listened as before.

"Hark!" he said. "Bells, do you not hear them?"

"No," returned Philip; "it was but a chiming chord in the music."

Mary ceased playing, and awhile they all sat silent.

"What do you say, dear?" asked Hubert, turning his blind face towards where Emily sat at Philip's side.

"I did not speak, father," replied Emily softly. Philip had called him father, and the girl unconsciously did the same.

"I thought you called; but no, it was not your voice."

After a little while the old man again rose and walked towards the door.

"Hark! She is calling again. I must be going home," he said.

"Oh, pray do not leave us, father," pleaded Emily, clinging to his hand. "The night is dark and the snow is falling; stay with us a little longer."

"My child, the darkness is as the light to me, and I am warm to-night; I shall not feel the snow."

Entreaties were of no avail. "He must go now," he said, "and go alone." Emily would have sent for her father's carriage, but the old man resolutely refused to ride—"his servant was below, and they would walk home together." He wished them each and all a kind farewell, and calling Philip and Emily to him, he laid his old withered hands upon their heads and blessed them again and again. And then he groped his way out into the night and the falling snow. The shadow of the poor old man's sorrow and unrest remained long after he was gone, and it was not till Dick and Ebenezer had exhausted their stories of songs and they were saying good-bye at the door while the bells rang in the Christmas morning that the cloud vanished and left them wholly happy.

"And now," said Dick, waving his rectangular arms oratorically—"and now let me wish you all a merry Christmas and many happy new years. May all your ways be strewn with unexpected joys! Be all your earthly hopes fulfilled, and still your best and brightest lie beyond. For those who live for

earthly hopes alone, but gather flowers which wither at the touch ; but they who, scorning not earth's blossoms, look towards the amaranth of God, shall see the seed of buried hopes and joys spring up to make life's closing glad."

CHAPTER XL.

"AT REST AT LAST."

It was New Year's Eve. The snow still lay thick on the ground, and the frost was so intense that the hale old postman, Sam Catchpole, had his toes frostbitten as he trotted down the untrodden paths of Otley hill.

But it was not the cold that made his face so pale and his teeth to chatter so as he huddled over the taproom fire at the village Inn.

"Save us, Master Catchpole, you look as if you had met Hubert Maitland's wraith on your rounds," remarked a hearty farmer-looking man who was sipping his grog in a remote corner of the room.

A young carter, who, whip in hand, stood drinking a pint of porter at the window with one eye on his team, the other on John Dunder's fire, turned sharply to the speaker.

"Come now, Farmer Rook, don't you be talking superstition," he said.

"What do you know about superstition?" returned the first speaker. "Your father believed in Hubert Maitland's wraith, and so would you ha' done if it hadn't been for that new-fangled eddication, whose only good, as far as I sees, is to teach boys to contradict their elders."

"Well, anyhow, Farmer Rook, even you must admit that Hubert's wraith is exploded now," replied the young carter contemptuously.

"No, I don't. How can you prove that that old blind man as was here is the same Hubert Maitland that drowned himself in the river, as old John Hoskins, as was out and out the cleverest man in these parts afore you was born, has told us many a time in this very room? He ought to ha' knowed if anybody did, for he talked about nothen else all his life. I am

not sartin," added the champion of tradition reflectively, "that the old blind man wern't a wraith hisself—he looked uncommon like one."

The old postman, who, while the colloquy proceeded, sat shivering over the fire, turned nervously to the disputants as if he had something to say. But he altered his mind, and resumed his former attitude. As soon, however, as the sceptical young carter had paid his reckoning and whistled out doors, the postman beckoned Farmer Rook to his side and whispered,

"Do you really think there is such a thing as a wraith—Hubert Maitland's wraith?"

"Sartinly I do," said the farmer.

"And do you believe he meets men who are going to die—eh? do you believe that?" asked the postman eagerly.

"Why shouldn't I believe it?"

Hush! come nearer—don't tell them—I've not been a great swearer, and I allers was a churchman.—Lord ha' mercy on us!"

"Save us, man, how you tremble. Whatever is the matter with ye?" cried the farmer in alarm.

"Hush!" whispered the postman. "I've seen—him—there upon the hill—by the churchyard, where he used to walk."

"You don't——" and the farmer started horror-struck.

"Yes, I do. I was opening the iron gate, and my fingers were cold and stiff, and I felt a sort of chill all over me. I looked up, and the wraith came gliding by, so near I could have touched it, but its footsteps made no noise, and its great eyes looked straight forward. I saw it as plain as I see you, for it was only half dark. Lord help me, I'm afeard I'm a dead man."

It is no good trying to conceal a fact, it will out somehow. In a few minutes every man in the Greyhound knew that Hubert Maitland's wraith was abroad again, and had been seen by Catchpole the postman.

At daybreak on the New Year's morning the old sexton going to his task, found strange footsteps on the virgin snow. He tracked them as far as the newest grave, and there, nearly buried in the drift, with placid face, and hands crossed peacefully over his breast, lay all that was mortal of old Hubert

Maitland. He had found his way—how no one will ever know—to the spot where reposed all he had ever loved on earth: the dead below, and God's broad heaven above, earth for his bed, his coverlid the drifted snow, he there lay down, *at rest at last.*

CHAPTER XLI.

THE BEGINNING OF HAPPIER DAYS, AND THE END OF THE STORY.

Six months after came the summer, as it ever comes, in spite of all the sorrow in the world. There is gloom in Summerville Lodge, on the banks of the Thames, such as never before has fallen on the hospitable old house since that night when Mr. Cotton's name was in the *Gazette*, and Mr. Cotton fainted on his threshold. For Emily—bright, laughing little Emily Aldair, who of late has almost lived here with cousin Mary—has ceased to visit for awhile.

For why? Beside another river, many miles away, there stands a little garden-girt tree-shadowed villa, smiling in the sun. And in its bright window are two bright faces, smiling in the sun. And sometimes, when no one is passing, two brown heads wave backwards and forwards, and two pairs of young lips meet and cling, and meet and cling again, like kindred rosebuds romping in the breeze.

It is afternoon. Mr. Cotton has not yet returned from the City, and meek-eyed little Mary is alone. She has been singing, but she grew tired of that, so tired of it that she cried. There is not such a great difference between singing and crying after all. Now she falls back on her favourite pastime, looking over the portraits in the album. There is the old familiar face of Alaric Fane, a great, strong, sad, passionate face; handsome withal, and kind despite those unpleasant lines about the mouth. Mary thinks this the most interesting portrait in the book; so interesting, indeed, that she slips it out of its frame and carries it off to the garden, there to contemplate it more critically, in the sunshine. She sits down on an old garden seat, then, placing the portrait on her knees, and leaning her head on her hand, she gazes long and



earnestly at it, so long that the sun is setting and she does not heed it, so earnestly that a heavy step is rustling in the soft grass behind her and she does not hear it. A great shadow falls over her, but her eyes are dim, all the world seems a shadow to her, and she sees it not. Soon a great sigh sets free the gathered tears, and they rain heavily down on the pictured face. Mary hastily wipes them away. "Alaric, dear, dear Alaric," she sighs. The long shadow on the grass suddenly shortens, Mary looks round, and Alaric Fane's hand falls lovingly on her soft brown hair, and next moment his lips are pressed fervently on her brow. And then he kneels and holds the little, little fluttering hands in his great firm grasp, and looks up into Mary's frightened face. He says nothing, but the look of pity and kindness in his eyes deepens and brightens till it almost resembles the passionate gaze of love.

Mary rises, and Alaric rises too; still the silence is unbroken save by their rustling steps on the grass. But Alaric's red face has become pale, and Mary's pale one has become red. When the door is reached they do not enter, but turn aside and sit down again in the arbour. Then Alaric says softly,

"Mary!"

"Yes, Alaric."

"I need not tell you my history, as I once told it to your friend who is now Philip's wife: you have divined it from the first."

Mary blushed a little deeper by way of assent, and Alaric continued—

"I thought then never to know again the happiness of a woman's love, though I have yearned for that as my only hope of salvation. Had it come earlier I might have had a whole heart to give in return. I cannot love you, little Mary, but I honour and adore you, the purest and noblest little woman in the world. Will you marry me, Mary, without love?"

Mr. Cotton's daughter raised her sweet face smilingly.

"Yes, Alaric, if you wish it, for my heart has love enough for both."

"God bless my soul! billing and cooing like young doves in spring," cried a voice behind them, and leaping up they encountered the astonished Mr. Cotton.

"It is only Alaric, papa," says Mary, with all the assur-

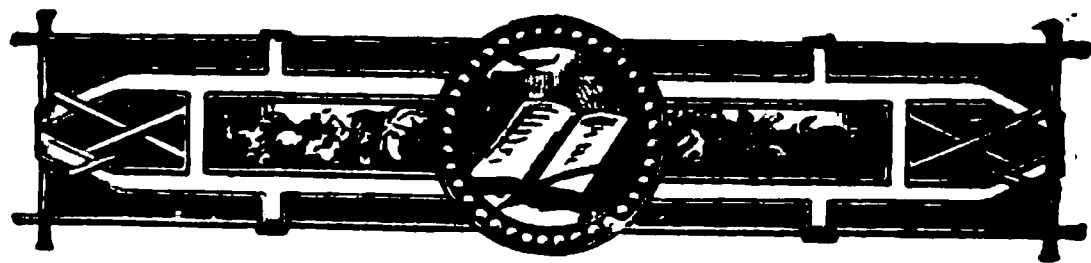
ance imaginable—"Alaric Fane, who left us all the money when we were in such trouble, and I was thanking him; that's all."

"What!" cried the merchant with a sudden gleam of intelligence in his keen grey eyes. "Well, well," he added, "it's one way of thanking him." Then taking the young man's hand he said—"The bankers refused me the name of my benefactor, but I know of no one to whom I would sooner owe my life and fortune than to you. I am happy to say, sir, that I am now in a position to return the money with due interest."

"Nay," said Alaric, bending tenderly over Mary's upturned face, "the debt is already paid, sir, and here I seal the bond."

Many years have passed, and many graves have arisen in Otley churchyard. But there are none so cared for as those three which lie in yonder corner in the long wild grass. For Philip Clark and his wife live there at the new-built house where the Hillside Farm once stood, and their children bring the fairest flowers of all the garden here and strew them over these lonely graves. In the great house by the river side, once the property of the Aldairs, the new Rector of Otley has taken up his abode. He is a great, sad-faced man, who is never seen to smile; yet every man, woman, and child in the parish love him like a father. He is no preacher, and it is said that he is anything but sound in his doctrine. So much the worse for the doctrine! His wife is said to have been the daughter of a London merchant, but she is quite a lady, particularly in the matter of sick nursing, and house-to-house visitation. Then to hear her sing duets with her cousin's husband, while her own burly husband dances her cousin's babes to the music! Do you wish to hear anything of the many other folks you have met in these pages? No; you did not know them well enough to care what became of them. But I knew them years and years ago, when I was little more than a boy. Forgive me if I am just a trifle blind to the faults of such old acquaintances.

THE END.



GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO.

III.—TALES FROM THE *DECAMERON*.

ALBEIT in the inscription on his tomb he lays claim to no title save that of Poet [*Patria Certaldum, studium fuit alma Poesis*], not caring to be known to posterity as either philosopher or *Oratore*, Boccaccio's poems have never stood very high in the world's estimation. One of them, indeed, the *Teseide*, containing the story of Theseus' war against the Amazons and the Rape of Hippolyte, is so far interesting in that, with the exception of *Febusso e Breusso*, it is perhaps the most ancient specimen extant of the eight-line rhyming stanza, and the precursor of *Orlando* and *Gerusalemme*. All else that he wrote, whether poetry or prose, save the *Decameron*, and perhaps the unfinished commentary on the *Divina Commedia*, is, if not altogether neglected, at any rate only read by curious students. But the *Decameron* will never die. Selections from it are regularly read in the Normal Schools of Italy, and translations of it into every important European language have long ago appeared. Before giving, however, any specimens of the Hundred Tales of which it consists, it will be well to say a word or two as to the object with which it was originally written, and the reception accorded to it. The stories are supposed to be told in turn (during a period of ten days, as the word *Decameron* implies) by a company of ladies and gallants, who have fled into the country in consequence of the plague raging at Florence. Under cover of fiction (though not a few are *true* stories) he seeks to draw pictures of the human family, pleasing or disgusting *pro re natâ*, to caricature human passions, and finally to draw public attention to divers gross abuses then prevailing. Thus he holds up to scorn and ridicule the excesses of the Pontifical Court, the widely-spread hypocrisy, the unscrupulous rapacity—in a word, the wholesale immorality of the age, pretty much

as in our own time Charles Dickens (with a heavier hand however, and a more broadly comic pen) has exposed certain flagrant abuses in the immortal characters of Messrs. Squeers, Bumble, and Chadband. Without venturing to draw any comparison between the two great caricaturists, we may at any rate say this, that the humour and pathos which have provoked so many smiles and tears in the readers of the English tales, were to be found in at least equal perfection five hundred years ago in the pages of the *Decameron*. But abuses are not to be exposed with impunity. Hence we find the Council of Trent forbidding the use of Boccaccio's masterpiece until it should be expurgated. It was first published in the year 1353. In the Library of San Lorenzo at Florence is the oldest extant MS. copy, bearing date 1384, and executed by Francesco Mannelli. Boccaccio made his will (it is still preserved at Siena) in 1374, and thereby left his books and MSS. to Fra Martino da Signa, his confessor, with instructions that he should in his turn bequeath them to the Convent of Santo Spirito for the use of students: but the original MS. of the *Decameron* no longer exists. In 1574 an edition after the Mannelli text was issued by the Academy of Florence, Pope Pius V. having previously, in accordance with the request of the Grand Duke Cosmo I., caused it to be much mutilated. The Grand Duke Francis I. caused new expurgations to be made by one Salviati, who was afterwards charged by Boccacini (in his *Pietra del Paragone*) with having performed his task, not from any disgust which he felt at Boccaccio's language, but at the instance of the Giunti printers in Florence, who offered him 25 *scudi* (about £5 6s. 3d.) as the price of the mutilation. But the edition to which in this country most interest probably attaches is that of the year 1471, concerning which a writer in the *Cornhill Magazine* for October, 1867, in the course of an interesting paper on Book-Collecting, makes the following remarks:—"The most stupendous price ever obtained for any book was what the Boccaccio's *Decameron* of 1471 brought at the Roxburgh sale. At the beginning of this century the copy—then, and for a long time afterwards, considered to be unique—was in the possession of a London bookseller, and was purchased by the Duke for 100 guineas. Two other copies are known now, one in the Ambrosian

Library at Milan, the other in the Imperial Library, Paris. But the first wants one and the second two leaves. The edition is said to have been suppressed by Papal authority. The 17th June, 1812, is the *dies cretâ notandus* in the annals of Bibliomania. Dibdin has a most graphic account of it in his *Bibliographical Decameron*. One extract will give the pith of his story:—

“ ‘The honour of firing the first shot was due to a gentleman of Shropshire, unused to this species of warfare, and who seemed to recoil from the reverberation of the report himself had made. “One hundred guineas!” he exclaimed. Again a pause ensued, but anon the biddings rose rapidly to five hundred guineas. Hitherto, however, it was evident that the firing was but masked and desultory. At length all random shots ceased, and the champions before named (Earl Spencer and the Marquis of Blandford) stood gallantly up to each other, resolving not to flinch from a trial of their respective strengths. A thousand guineas were bid by Earl Spencer, to which the Marquis added ten. You might have heard a pin drop. All eyes were turned—all breathing well nigh stopped—every sword was put home within its scabbard, and not a piece of steel was seen to move or to glitter except that which each of these champions brandished in his valorous hand.’

“At length Lord Spencer had bid £2,250. The Marquis quietly added his usual ten, and down dropped the hammer. When the Marquis's library was disposed of in 1819, the day chosen for the sale of this famous book was the 17th of June, the anniversary of its former sale. But nothing could revive the old excitement, and it was knocked down for £918 15s. It is now in the possession of Lord Spencer.”

It is much to be regretted that barely one-third of the Hundred Tales can, with due regard to decency, be placed in the hands of the general reader. It is hoped, however, that in even this third there will appear abundant evidence of Boccaccio's various points of excellence as a story-teller. To his humour and pathos allusion has already been made: in addition to these we find a keen insight into the weaknesses of poor human nature, a general bias in favour of all that is honest and true, and a ruthless denunciation of many of the most glaring abuses of the 14th century. Without the author

of the *Decameron*, Italian literature would possess only two-thirds of its present wealth, for, according to Fanfani, an excellent judge, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio are the three main fountain-heads whence flows all that is beautiful in it, all that is true, all that is great. And now let him speak for himself.

HOW ABRAHAM THE JEW TURNED CHRISTIAN.

“ There was once, as I have heard tell, a great merchant in Paris named Giannotto di Civigni, a good man and true, upright in his dealings, and possessed of a considerable business in the mercery line. Among his intimate friends he counted one Abraham a Jew, a very wealthy man, a merchant like himself, and just as upright and straightforward. Now, observing these estimable qualities in him, Giannotto began to take it much to heart that the soul of a man at once so able, so wise, and so good as was his friend, should, for lack of faith, be consigned to perdition ; and so in a friendly spirit he would urge him to abandon the errors of the Jewish creed and turn to the Christian truth—‘ he could see for himself,’ he said, ‘ how good and holy the latter was from the fact of its prospering and gaining ground, while, on the other hand, the former, his own persuasion, was dwindling, as he might perceive, and ere long would die out altogether.’ The Jew, however, made answer that no faith, as he believed, was holy or true save the Jewish, in the which he had been born and intended to live and die, adding that nothing could ever make him swerve from this resolution. But Giannotto was not to be deterred from renewing the subject, and indeed after a few days he returned to the charge with words of similar drift, proving to him, in the voluminous fashion peculiar to business men, how and why our creed is superior to that of the Jews. And what though the other was thoroughly up in the Jewish law, yet, whether owing to the great friendship he felt for Giannotto, or to the effect which the words, put by the Holy Spirit in the ignorant man’s mouth really produced upon him, the demonstrations of the Christian began to please the Jew vastly. Still, however, he held fast by his own faith, and would not allow himself to be turned away therefrom. The more obstinate he became, the more persistently did Giannotto urge him, until at length, van-

quished by an importunity which seemed likely to know no end, he said:—‘Now see here, Giannotto; you wish me to become a Christian, and I am not disinclined thereto; indeed, I am so much in earnest about it, that I would fain first go to Rome, and there see with my own eyes the man who, according to you, is God’s vicar upon earth, and observe his manners and customs, as also those of his Cardinal brothers. Then, if they shall appear to me to be such as, added to what you have already said, will enable me to comprehend the superiority of your faith to mine—the fact which you have taken it upon yourself to demonstrate—I will do as I have told you, and become a convert to your religion. In the opposite event, I will remain what I am at this moment—a Jew.’

“On hearing this Giannotto was sadly disheartened, and said to himself—‘Now all the pains, which, thinking to have converted him, I fancied were lavished to such good purpose, have been in vain; for should he enter the Roman Court and see what foul and criminal lives the clergy lead, not only will he refuse to become a Christian, but even had he been already baptized, he would undoubtedly, on beholding such a spectacle, turn Jew again.’ To Abraham, however, he said—‘Nonsense, my friend, why take upon yourself the fatigue and expense which a journey from this place to Rome entails, to say nothing of the host of perils, both by land and sea, to which a wealthy man like yourself is liable? Think you there is not a priest to be found to baptize you here? And if, haply, some doubts still remain in your mind as to the faith which I have demonstrated to you, where are there greater masters and professors of it, who can set you right on any points that you may wish or ask to be explained, than here in Paris? And this being so, the journey you contemplate is to my mind a work of supererogation. Remember the prelates at Rome are of the same nature as those whom you have seen here, only so far holier in proportion as they are nearer to the Chief Pastor. Be advised, therefore, and reserve this fatigue for another time, when peradventure you may be wanting to seek a Grace—and then perhaps I will bear you company.’

“Quoth the Jew: ‘I believe, Giannotto, that what you say

is nothing but the truth. I have, however, not to waste words, quite made up my mind to go notwithstanding, that is, if you wish me to do what you have so often and so earnestly begged; whereas, if I go not, I shall never perform so much as a jot of it.' Seeing what his friend's determination was, Giannotto said no more than 'Go, and God prosper you!' But inwardly he felt convinced that the Jew would never become a convert, when once he had seen the Roman Court. However, as the loss in the matter would not be his own, he refrained from any further attempts to dissuade him from the expedition.

"The Jew therefore mounted his horse, and with all possible speed repaired to Rome, where he was received with honour by his brother Jews. But, without telling anyone the reason of his coming, he began to watch carefully the behaviour of the Pope, the Cardinals, the other prelates, and indeed of all persons attached to the Court. And between what he, a man who kept his eyes open, himself observed, and what he learnt from others, he discovered that from the highest to the lowest they one and all committed the most abominable sins without the slightest compunction or shame, and to such a degree, that, in gaining any great end, the influence of the most abandoned characters was of no little avail. Added to which they were all gluttons, tipplers, and as much the slaves of their appetites as so many brute beasts. And looking further, he noticed that they were, every man of them, avaricious and greedy of gain, insomuch that they bought and sold human, nay Christian, flesh and blood, and sacred objects of every description, howsoever connected with the offices of the Church, and carried on a traffic in them, which surpassed in its proportions, and the number of its agents, the operations of the mercery or any other line of business in Paris. Downright Simony they called 'Power of Attorney,' while gluttony they dubbed 'maintenance,' as though God (to say nothing of the actual meaning of the terms) did not know the intentions of the worst hearts, or would allow Himself, as men allow themselves, to be taken in by titles. All this and a great deal besides, of which we say nothing, being utterly distasteful to the Jew, who was a sober and temperate man, he felt that he had seen enough, and made up his mind to return to Paris; which he did.

“As soon as ever he was aware of his arrival, Giannotto went to see him, feeling sure that the chance of his conversion was gone for ever; and they two made merry together. After the lapse of some days, Giannotto asked him what opinion he had formed of the Holy Father, the Cardinals, and the other persons about Court. To which Abraham straightway replied:—

“It seems to me a pity that God suffers a single one of them; and I say so because, unless I am much mistaken, I saw not a particle of sanctity, or devotion, or good deeds and example of life, or indeed of anything else that is good, in a single person attached to the Church. On the contrary, luxury, avarice, gluttony, and such like—ay and worse, if in any human being worse can exist—seemed to me to be in such favour with all, that I am inclined to regard that Court as a forge in which the works of the devil, rather than those of God, are elaborated. In a word, to the best of my judgment, it appears that your Pastor, and consequently all his subordinates, are doing their utmost, and are using every art and talent they possess, in order to reduce the Christian religion to nought and banish it from the world—and this in the very place of all others in which they ought to be its foundation and support! But whereas I see that this result does not come to pass, and that in spite of their efforts in an opposite direction, your religion is ever spreading and becoming daily brighter and more manifest, the true inference, methinks, must be, that it is the holiest of all existing creeds, and that therefore its foundation and support are the Holy Spirit, and not the Pope and his associates. Hence, though formerly I was inflexible and turned a deaf ear to your arguments, I now tell you candidly that on no account would I any longer decline to become a Christian. Let us, then, go to the church, and there cause me to be baptized after the manner of your holy faith.’

“Never was man more delighted than Giannotto, who had anticipated a conclusion directly contrary to that which he now heard pronounced. Conducting his friend without delay to the Church of Notre Dame de Paris, he summoned the clergy to administer the rite of baptism, which, being assured that the candidate really so wished it, they proceeded at

once to do. And Giannotto, as he raised him from the holy font, named him Giovanni, and at the hands of very able divines caused him to be thoroughly instructed in the tenets of our faith, which Abraham embraced with alacrity. And thereafter he was known as a good and worthy man, the life that he led being holy."

It will be readily understood that such a tale as this did not make Boccaccio many friends among the clergy. The following, however, can have provoked no animosity, illustrating as it does a very amiable feature, if not a very common one, in the human character.

THE LADY AND THE HAWK.

"Jacopodi Borghese Domenichi, who used to live in our city (and, for all I know, he may be living there still), was a man greatly respected and of considerable authority in my day, and on the score of courtesy and virtue, much more than for his noble blood, deserves to be always had in remembrance. When now full of years he used frequently to amuse himself by talking over old times with his neighbours and others, and this he did with a better grace, more accuracy, and a clearer memory than anyone else of his time.

"He was wont to tell, among other capital stories, how that once there lived in Florence a young man named Federigo, of the Alberighi family, and held in honour beyond all other gallants in Tuscany for his chivalry and courteous demeanour. Now he, as is usually the case with your pretty men, was enamoured of a beautiful lady, one Monna Giovanna, who was regarded as one of the fairest and most fascinating women in Florence. And in order to win her favour, he frequented tilt and joust, gave splendid banquets and presents, and, in short, spent his patrimony without reserve; while she (for her sense of honour was equal to her beauty) cared nothing for either his achievements or the gallant himself. Now, since Federigo was living far beyond his means and was earning not a penny, his fortune, as was only to be expected, failed to stand the strain, and he suddenly found himself a poor man, with nothing remaining to him save a sorry little farm, on the proceeds of which he lived but meanly, and a single hawk—the latter, however, being one of the best of its kind in the world. Wherefore, albeit his love had in nowise abated, yet forasmuch as he could no longer

live in town, as he fain would have done, he retired to Campi, where the farm was, and there he bore his poverty without a murmur, asking no man's assistance, and spending his time, whenever practicable, in the pursuit of small birds.

“ While he was thus living in reduced circumstances, it fell upon a day that the husband of Monna Giovanna was seized with a sore sickness ; and feeling that his disease was mortal he made his last will and testament, in the which he appointed his son, a biggish lad, to be his heir, providing that, in the event of the latter's death without lawful issue, Monna Giovanna, whom he had ever dearly loved, should succeed to the inheritance ; and so he died. Giovanna was thus left a widow, and in the summer, as is the custom with our ladies, she retired to her country seat, a stone's throw from Federigo's farm. And so it came to pass that the lad, her son, began to make himself at home with Federigo, and to amuse himself with hawk and hound. Seeing Federigo's hawk fly, he took a huge fancy to it, and would have given anything to possess it ; yet, perceiving how much the bird was valued by its master, he did not venture to prefer any request. About this time the lad fell sick, to his mother's great grief, for he was her only child, and she loved him with all her heart. The whole day long she hovered about his bed trying incessantly to cheer him, and often asking if there were anything that he fancied, and begged him to tell her if there were, for that she would certainly find a means of procuring it. In answer to these repeated enquiries he at length said : — ‘ Mother mine, if you could succeed in procuring for me Federigo's hawk, I believe I should get well directly.’ On hearing this request she hesitated, reflecting what course she should pursue ; she knew that Federigo had loved her long, and yet had not received from her so much as a single look of encouragement, and therefore she said within herself— ‘ How can I go or send to ask him for this hawk, which, by what I hear, is the best that ever flew, and on it his livelihood depends ? How can I be so graceless as to wish to take away from a gallant man his sole remaining pleasure ?’ Perplexed by these considerations, and yet knowing all the while that did she but ask, her request would certainly be granted, she was at a loss what to

say, and so held her peace, leaving her son without an answer. But at last her mother's love so far prevailed, that she determined to satisfy him, and, come what might, to go herself for the bird and bring it back with her; and so she said—'Be comforted, my boy, and think of nothing but getting well, for I promise you that the first thing I do to-morrow morning shall be to go for it—ay, and I'll bring it back to you,' words which so gladdened the child's heart that he began to show signs of amendment that very day. The next morning, in company with another lady, she started as though for a casual stroll, and straightway repaired to Federigo's cottage. Now, as it was not, and had not been for some days, good hawking weather, he was busy in his garden tidying up and making various little improvements; but hearing that Monna Giovanna was at the wicket asking for him, he was filled with astonishment, and joyfully ran towards her. She, on her part, when she saw him coming, stepped forward with a cordiality ladies know so well how to assume, and, having received his respectful greeting, began, 'I trust you are well, Federigo,' and then—'I am come to make amends to you for the losses which you have sustained on my account, through loving me more than there was ever any occasion for you to do, and the compensation I offer is this: my companion and myself propose to share a friendly breakfast with you this morning.' 'Madonna,' returned Federigo humbly, 'I do not remember to have incurred loss on your account; it is rather a benefit that I have gained, for if I have ever been a man of any merit it is for the esteem and the love that I have cherished towards you: and I assure you that this kind visit is infinitely more precious in my eyes than would be the liberty to spend over again all that in days gone by I spent; but 'tis to a humble host that you are come.' With this he bashfully led her into the cottage, and thence to the garden, where, there being no one else with whom he could leave her, he said—'Madonna, this good woman, wife of yonder labourer, will bear you company, while I go to lay the table.'

"Now, although his poverty was great, in what difficulties his former extravagance could involve him he had yet to learn. But on this particular morning, not finding anything

whatever wherewith to regale his guest—ay, and a guest for the love of whom he had once regaled so many—he did repent him of his folly ; and so vexed was he that he began to revile his fortune like a madman, and ran hither and thither seeking money or at least something to pawn, but in vain. It was growing late, and he was bent on providing some dainty dish, though unwilling to ask a favour of any man, even of his own day-labourer—when suddenly his eye fell on the hawk as it sat on its perch. There being absolutely nothing else to which he could have recourse, he laid hands on the bird, and, finding it plump, bethought him it would make a dish dainty enough to set before such a lady. So without more ado he wrung its neck, and giving it to one of his maids bade her pluck, truss, spit, and in short roast it without loss of time. And when he had spread a snow-white cloth—for he had still some tablecloths left—he went back with a smiling face to his guest in the garden, and said that the repast, the best he could provide for her, was ready. So the lady and her companion rose and took their places at the table, while Federigo served them with the greatest attention—and in perfect innocence they devoured the good hawk.

“After breakfast they conversed awhile pleasantly with their host, and then, thinking the time had arrived to state her real business, Monna Giovanna turned kindly to Federigo, and thus began :—‘When you call to mind, Federigo, your past life and what you peradventure regarded as my cruelty and hardness of heart, you will, I doubt not, marvel at my presumption, on hearing the errand to which this visit of mine is mainly due ; but, were you or had you ever been a father, and so knew how powerful is the love that a child can inspire, methinks in some degree at least you would hold me excused. You are childless, but I, who have a son, cannot escape the laws which bind all mothers alike ; and this being so, I must, despite my own repugnance to the task, and in violation of all decency and propriety, beg of you that which I know you to hold especially dear (and with good reason, seeing that fortune has left you nothing else to divert and console yourself withal)—to wit, your hawk. My boy is so fascinated with the bird, that, ’an I return without it, I fear me lest his sickness be so aggravated that I lose him for

ever. Not, therefore, for the love you bear me, by the which you are in no wise bound, but for that nobleness of heart, which has ever been more conspicuous in the practice of courtesy than in aught besides, I pray that you will be pleased to make me this gift. So shall I save my boy alive, and always feel that it was owing to you that I was enabled to do it?'

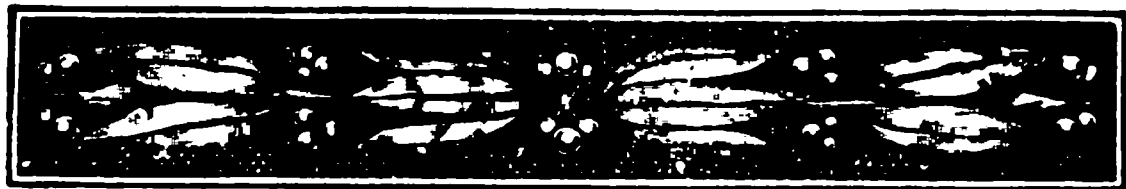
"Hearing her request, and knowing as he did that he could not possibly gratify it, forasmuch as he had already given her the bird to eat, Federigo burst into tears before her and could answer never a word. Whereupon, thinking that this emotion arose from the thought of being obliged to part with this good hawk rather than from any other cause, she was on the point of retracting her words, but still refrained, awaiting his reply, when his tears should have ceased. And thus at length he made answer, "Madonna, ever since it pleased God that I should set my affections on you, I have in many matters considered fortune perverse, and sorely have I complained of her. But all has been as nothing compared with this present unkindness, for which I can never forgive her, when I think that you should have come to my poor cottage—when I dwelt in a mansion you would not cross my threshold—and that you should wish a little gift of me, which, owing to her perversity, I am unable to bestow; and why, you shall hear. When I heard that in your kindness you were disposed to breakfast with me, having regard to your excellence and merits, I deemed it a meet and suitable thing to entertain you with the choicest fare I could procure, rather than with that which is set before ordinary guests. So, bethinking me of the good hawk, which you now ask of me, I judged it worthy food, and this morning accordingly it was roasted and served up to you on the dish which I had arranged with my own hands for the occasion. Now, however, that I find you desired the bird in another shape, I feel as though I should never again know any peace of mind.' And with this, to prove the truth of his words, he brought the feathers, the feet, and the beak, and laid them on the ground before her. Monna Giovanna at first upbraided him for having killed such a bird and given it to a woman to eat, but inwardly she could not choose but commend a magnanimity which no poverty could

deaden. Left thus without a hope of gaining her end, and thereby rendered anxious as to her son's health, she took her departure, returning home sadly disappointed ; and not many days passed before the boy, whether through chagrin at not getting the hawk, or in the natural course of his disease, to his mother's unutterable grief, expired.

“Awhile she lived in tears and bitterness of spirit, until—for she was very wealthy and still young—she was urged by her brothers to marry again ; and though, as far as she herself was concerned, she would fain have remained as she was, yet, harassed by their importunity, and calling to mind Federigo's merit and his late act of magnificence, namely, the sacrifice of his hawk in her honour, she said to them—‘If it pleased you I would fain desist, but if it seem good in your eyes that I take a husband, of a surety I will take none other than Federigo.’ On this her brothers fell to laughing at her, and cried :—‘Idiot, what is this that thou sayest ? what wilt thou with a man who has not a penny to bless himself withal ?’ To which she replied :—‘Brothers mine, I know well that it is as you say, but I prefer poverty-stricken merit to gilded worthlessness.’

“So, seeing that her mind was made up, and knowing Federigo to be a worthy man, for all his impecuniosity, the brothers raised no further objection, but gave her to him with all her wealth. And Federigo, when he found himself wedded to one whom he had loved so long, and who was uncommonly well off to boot, mended his extravagant ways and passed the remainder of his life with her in peace and happiness.”





WHAT WILL SOCIETY SAY?

A NOVEL.

By MERVYN MERRITON,

Author of "Romances of the Chivalric Ages," "The Ringwoods of Ringwood," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XL.

ONCE more the exigencies of our narrative take us to Lentworth, where we find that Claude Cotherstone has been installed for a full week past, making his society acceptable, not only to father, mother, and daughter, but to numerous guests—none of whom are particularly known to us—staying in the house.

Mrs. Leadstone had been receiving a succession of visitors, instigated thereto by Claude, in order, he said, to divert Juliana's thoughts, and prevent her from dwelling on Frank's absence, and the too painful subject principally connected with it. The truth was that the presence of many persons afforded him opportunities for drawing Mrs. Aylesmere apart, and carrying on with her the mysterious communications which formed part of the network he was forming around this, the chief victim of his dark plot. He had discovered, with no little satisfaction, Frank's systematic avoidance of Miss Fenton's name in his letters to Juliana. Such discovery gave him possession of additional evidence, in case of necessity; though in truth, imbued as was Juliana with the belief that Frank's return to the stage had been a mere pretext to cover other objects, any such additional evidence was hardly required. Still, however, in the cup of Claude's satisfaction there was one drop of bitterness. All his fine-spun schemes had not been devised, and set in operation, with the mere object of causing a difference between Juliana and his successful rival. He had long entertained for Juliana that feeling which men of his stamp glorify with the name of love,

and additional stimulus had been given to his passion by the time and trouble he had devoted to its object. But such was Juliana's natural purity and innocence, that he perceived no reason to hope he had, as yet, even aroused in her the sentiment which opens to so many women the door through which there is no return—that, namely, of a desire to be revenged upon a faithless husband. There remained to him but the somewhat stereotyped and very unsatisfactory resource of leading her to compromise herself with him—unsatisfactory because any subsequent relations which may arise become the result of circumstances rather than of reciprocal sentiment; stereotyped, inasmuch as the experience of life proves that a large portion of the women who fall from their high estate so fall because they have taken some step which they allow themselves to be persuaded is irretrievable, when it is but indiscreet.

Juliana was the more thrown into the dangerous intimacy which so suited Cotherstone's views, from the fact that she had not a single intimate female friend. Between her mother and herself there was no real mental sympathy; nothing but that species of association formed between two persons against another whom they have come to regard as a common enemy.

The young person *née* Charlotte Gibson had about six months ago become Charlotte Bigge, having wedded the stalwart Edward, and been by him installed as hostess of a considerable house of entertainment at Dimborough, known as the Green Dragon. But for this, Juliana would have found in Charlotte's natural acuteness and unwavering fealty to the "old family" a powerful antidote to the moral poison with which her mind had been filled.

In spite of the varied occupation furnished to the heads of a house filled with guests, the Squire's attention was, in an unusual degree, drawn to his daughter. He remarked that she was alternately excited and depressed, that she rather avoided than sought the society of the younger ladies of the party, that, when asked to sing or play, she would plead fatigue, hoarseness, headache, and so on. At first he set this down to the general account of impatience at her husband's absence, an arrangement to which

the good man firmly believed she had consented entirely at her mother's instance. When, however, he perceived that the time drew near for her departure to meet Frank at Birmingham without restoring her to her equanimity, he ventured to hazard a remark to his wife on the subject. The reply made to him—at once unsatisfactory and enigmatical—was, "I'm surprised, Mr. Leadstone, that *you* should be surprised. As people make their beds they must lie upon them. It's at once too late and too early to take remedial steps."

Thus repulsed by Mrs. Leadstone, the Squire attempted to draw out Juliana herself, but with no better success. The fact was that the word had been passed by Cotherstone to avoid enlightening Mr. Leadstone, of whose downright, sledgehammer mode of proceeding, when once fairly aroused, he had a wholesome terror, and consequently felt that any interference from this quarter, at the present juncture, might seriously derange his combinations. He the more dreaded any complication of events because he had of late found Mrs. Leadstone herself somewhat less manageable than in past days. The fact was that gradually, almost insensibly, over her violent and unreasonable dislike of Frank her better feelings as a mother were beginning to assert their influence. She could not blind herself to the anguish endured by her child—for she loved Juliana after a fashion of her own. Thus distracted between tenderness and jealousy, she felt, now that the climax she had been eagerly assisting to hurry on seemed imminent, how great a responsibility she was incurring. She began to ask herself whether, even admitting Frank to be all that Claude Cotherstone's broadly-hinted suspicions had led her to believe, she had acted wisely, and for her daughter's happiness as a wife, when she poured those suspicions into her daughter's ears, and now it was that, probably for the first time in her own married life, she stood self-arraigned before her conscience on the charge of having failed to obtain the confidence and sympathy of her husband. Unpolished in manner, of defective education, Leadstone yet possessed a solidity of judgment and a rectitude of principle which it was impossible not to respect. Had she been with him on the footing proper to the relationship of wife to husband, she would necessarily have consulted him before committing her-

self to the sway of Claude Cotherstone, or, in the hesitation which had taken possession of her mind, she would have resorted to him for advice and assistance. But regrets on the subject were vain. She must proceed in the course she had chosen, and with the counsellor she had trusted. To him alone, indeed, could she, or did she, speak about Frank and his affairs, for Juliana had of late ceased all allusion to the subject, avoiding, moreover, as much as possible occasions of private conversation with her mother.

This was the situation of affairs when, one day, Miles Berrington rode over to Lentworth Hall. Mrs. Leadstone and the ladies were out driving; the men staying in the house were out shooting; Juliana alone was at home. Miles told the servant he particularly wished to see Mrs. Aylesmere, so his name was sent up to her.

"I've brought you something likely to interest you," Miles said cheerily, when they met, at the same time presenting her with a newspaper. "I know your father doesn't take this paper—not his politics. It contains an extract from a Manchester paper, with a brilliant account of Mr. Philip Francis' performance in the *Lady of Lyons*."

"At Manchester, you say, Mr. Berrington—not Birmingham yet?"

"No—you told me yourself the company is not to be at Birmingham for nearly three weeks."

"I did, but I thought it possible there might have been some change in Mr. Gainsborough's plans."

The secret cause of a certain hesitation she displayed in thus speaking was that she had absolutely been brought, by the insinuations whispered to her, to doubt the truth of Frank's assertions as to his movements.

"But," Miles continued, "the article contains at least as much praise of another person in whom you are interested—
dy who plays Pauline."

he lady?"

es—Miss Fenton—your friend and——"

liss Fenton!" Juliana almost shrieked out the name.

iss Fenton," Miles repeated, regarding Juliana with un-
ised astonishment.

re you quite sure it is Miss Fenton?"

“Read for yourself. But, my dear Juliana, how excited you are! What is the matter? Let me open the window”—for Juliana had sprung up with flashing eyes and burning cheeks, made a movement as if to quit the room, suddenly checked herself, and ended by falling listlessly on the sofa. “There, my dear! The air will revive you. Ah! I see you are better already—nothing like fresh air.”

Juliana had, in truth, by a strong effort of self-control, recovered her composure.

“It’s nothing,” she said. “The fact is, dear Mr. Berrington, so much has been said at home about Frank’s acting, that the subject has associations anything but pleasant. You can understand me, I am sure.”

“Still, Juliana, you must be proud of your husband’s exceptional abilities.”

“Of course I am”—this rather sharply—“Thanks to you for bringing me the paper. Will you leave it with me? I should like to read the critique by myself.” She then turned the conversation upon general subjects, but continued to speak with a constraint and uneasiness that told her godfather she was not anxious for the prolongation of his visit. When he rose to go, she followed him to the door, saying, “I’ll keep the paper, but will you promise me to mention the subject to nobody?”

Miles promised compliance with her request, and departed, thinking, as he rode away, “All’s not right in that quarter. What can it be? Something, I’ll be bound, in which ‘my mother-in-law’ has a hand. Ah! I’m not sure I was rendering Frank a service, when I promoted this marriage.”

The critique which Juliana—having ascended to, and locked herself in, her boudoir—began to devour rather than to read, was long and elaborate, written in Mr. Marwood’s best style. Doubtless, could that good-natured gentleman of the press have anticipated the circumstances under which so charming a reader as Juliana was to peruse his lucubrations he could have spared her a portion of the agony he inflicted upon her when he dwelt upon the passion, the truthfulness, the heart-broken sorrow, the deep despair displayed by Mr. Francis, and the tenderness, softness, and other womanly attributes that characterised Miss Fenton’s performance, in the various

scenes with each other; more particularly enlarging upon Claude's poetical description, in the second act, of the fairy home he would delight to make for Pauline—declaring that never probably since the days of Macready and Helen Faucit had the intention of the noble author been so perfectly realized; above all, when, in a species of climax complimentary to Mr. Gainsborough in his managerial capacity, he declared that it was only by making engagements which permitted an actor and an actress to play constantly together, and, so to speak, into one another's hands—as was known to be the case with Mr. Francis and Miss Fenton—that such thoroughness of detail and completeness of effect could be obtained.

“And this,” poor Juliana said to herself, “is Marie Duhamel, whom he has never once even named to me. No, no! Most certainly I cannot remember her name in one of Frank's letters. Oh! Deceived! Deceived! I am indeed deceived!”

In an agony of grief, she threw herself, sobbing hysterically, on the sofa.

“If you please, ma'am, it's time to dress for dinner.” These words—spoken, in fact, for the fourth time by Marly, Charlotte Gibson's successor, without the door—awoke Juliana from a heavy sleep which had mercifully fallen upon her at the height of her sorrow. She sprang up with a sense of some great woe hanging undefined before her suddenly-aroused consciousness. By the time she had reached the door, she recollected everything—Miles Berrington's visit, the newspaper, the terrible revelation—and when Marly entered she had composed her thoughts in accordance with a resolution which, when the first tempest of sorrow had swept over her, and before she became overpowered by sleep, she had formed. This resolution was to mention the circumstance of having received the newspaper to no single person—not even to Claude Cotherstone. She could not bear that the intelligence of her husband's shamefulness should proceed from herself. It must be known from some other source in time—the later the better. She would await, not forestall the disclosure. She had of late studied, and with much success, the art of veiling her feelings; though, of course, she suffered more by the compression thus placed upon her natural impulsiveness than if she had allowed it to have way.

During dinner, and throughout the evening, Mrs. Aylesmere, though looking pale and betraying a certain weariness, was more outwardly cheerful than she had appeared for a long time. In the evening she delighted the company by her playing and singing. True, there was the very desperation of fire and passion in her piano performance, while a *larmoyant* sadness pervaded the tenderer passages of her singing; but these outward expressions of her mental condition were simply pleasing adjuncts to her hearers—what was death to her sad heart was sport to them.

Although Miles Berrington kept the promise he had given Juliana not to make any mention of the newspaper critique, he had been so much struck by her emotion that he seized the earliest occasion presented him to ask the Squire what he thought of Frank's return to the stage—not that he himself at all objected to it, he said, but if the young fellow chose to go away for months, why, in the name of wonder, should his wife be kept away from him? For kept away from him she was—that Leadstone knew just as well as he (Miles) did—by her mother. Selfish and in every way blameable conduct he must say it was.

“You're right, old friend,” the Squire replied dolefully. “I'm sorry, very sorry for it. Things isn't as Juliana and I could wish 'em to be. It's all alongo' that there system I've been fool enough to give into all my married life—lettin' things go on as I know to be bad, rather than have a fight, and scenes, and all that. Howsumever, it won't last long. Juliana's goin' to Birmingham, and I do trust—stage or no stage—Frank, when once he gets her away, will keep her away, and never bring her back afore they gets settled in Chester Street.”

Miles hoped so too, but, seeing that the subject was painful to his old friend, he did not continue it.

Juliana, in pursuance of the resolution she had formed, continued to avoid private conversation, alike with her father, mother, and Claude Cotherstone, seeking—by a bizarre contrariety—the society of those young ladies who, from their conversation and habits, were really the least to her taste—women *with* whom she was, though not being *of* them: in truth this was a state of isolation sadly depressing to a spirit naturally expansive and sympathetic.

If Juliana did not seek Claude Cotherstone, the time had now come when he must necessarily seek her. One morning, having followed her from the breakfast room, he asked her if she would accompany him to a retired part of the grounds which he mentioned. He had received a newspaper, he said, assuming a melancholy and pitying air, which he wished to show her.

At the mention of a newspaper, Juliana felt a cold shiver come over her. She knew instinctively that this "newspaper" contained matter relating to Frank and Marie. "I'm ready to hear you," she said, coldly, decisively, and with brow unwontedly contracted.

Claude looked at her in silence, as they walked on, for, in point of fact, meditating a surprise of no ordinary character upon Juliana, he was himself beyond measure, and most unaccountably, astonished at her very peculiar demeanour. "A friend in London," he proceeded, "has sent me a Manchester paper."

"Ah! Frank is acting there," she said, looking away. "The Lady of Lyons, I believe—Claude Melnotte—a fine part, though I always thought the situations rather overstrained."

"Yes, Mrs. Aylesmere, Frank is acting there; but, what is more to the purpose, somebody else is acting there—acting with Frank—somebody whose name my lips almost refuse to pronounce in your presence!"

"A woman?"

"A woman."

"Well, Mr. Cotherstone, since your lips refuse to pronounce her name, I will make the attempt. I should not be all sur-
f this woman were Miss Fenton." All this was spoken
m, unwavering voice, and with an utterly dispassionate

de looked still more fixedly at her. He almost thought
l momentarily taken leave of her senses, and was
to realize the exact purport of the words she uttered.
you any knowledge of this?" he asked.

m not not astonished to hear it," was her somewhat
answer, after which, turning suddenly upon Claude,
ed, "Have *you* never heard it till this morning?"
w could I ever imagine such a thing possible, Mrs.
ere?"

“ Is there anything particularly wrong in Frank’s performing with Miss Fenton ? You know, Mr. Cotherstone, some actress must play with him.” Here she took the newspaper, and cast her eye over the column to which Claude pointed.

“ Really, Mrs. Aylesmere, your question is difficult to answer. Of course some woman must play the woman’s part. But, you know, Frank and Miss Fenton are upon a footing altogether so—so——”

“ So what, Mr. Cotherstone ? ”

“ I hardly know how to designate it—yet I fear from all I have heard—Mind, I am saying nothing of my own knowledge—one that can hardly be satisfactory to Frank’s wife.”

“ Don’t you think Frank’s wife should be the best judge of that ? ”

“ Naturally, since, no doubt, Frank has in his various letters told his wife he has been playing for nearly six weeks with Miss Fenton ! ”

Here Claude had, as he knew, touched the wound that rankled deep in Juliana’s heart. Startled out of her assumed impassibility, she cried wildly, “ No, he has not ! If he had, I should certainly have mentioned it to you. If *you* knew it, and concealed it, you have not acted as the friend I believed you to be.”

“ I will now confess to you, my dear Mrs. Aylesmere, that I have suspected it. You’ll say I might have informed myself. Indeed, that would not have been difficult. But what if I had ? Why should I widen the breach already existing between you and your husband ? ”

“ Who says there exists a breach between us ? There is no such breach ! There have been differences between Frank and my mother, and much, I fear, I increased them by wavering in my duty as a wife.”

“ Don’t reproach yourself, Mrs. Aylesmere. Indeed, you are blameless. Why take upon yourself the faults of others ? If Frank has—though, pray observe, I don’t say he has—shown himself unworthy of the treasure he possessed in you, let him bear the blame, and more than that ”—after a pause gravely and impressively—“ let him suffer the consequences.”

“ What do you mean by the consequences ? ”

“ The consequences ! Humph ! In such a case it remains with the wife—the injured wife—to determine what those

consequences shall be. There are easy-going wives who readily overlook the loss of what they, perhaps, never much cared for. There are others with deeper sensibilities who, though they never can forget, may yet forgive; others, again, who, once finding themselves deceived, have no thought but how to—to—be revenged on the deceiver."

"Revenged!" she repeated mechanically.

"Yes—revenged. If I were of your sex I should be of this last order. Knowing my own value, and finding myself unappreciated by one, I should turn to another who I knew could appreciate me rightly!"

There are some women so pure that even impurity may come to them clothed in the garb of purity. The doctrine thus laid down by Cotherstone would have been comprehended, in the sense in which he intended it, by a majority of young wives moving in Juliana's sphere of life, even without being illustrated—as it was—by the speaker's meaning glances; but in all probability she did not so read it. At all events, she made no demonstration whatever, observing a determined silence, and apparently being absorbed in her own reflections.

Claude felt puzzled. His knowledge of women was at fault. This woman was above his accustomed standard. His calculations were upset: he could not penetrate to the depths of Juliana's fine nature, which, in proportion with the accumulation of proof against Frank, revolted from admitting others to a share in her conviction of his faithlessness. Claude had misjudged her. Where he had looked for torrents of outspoken anguish, bursts of indignation, appeals for sympathy, he found silence, reserve, to all appearance complete self-possession. Thus brought to a standstill in his operations, check-mated in the game he was playing with human weaknesses and passions, he almost rejoiced when Juliana put an end to the interview by saying, although abruptly, not without feeling, "Accept my thanks for your good intentions. If I should have any advice to ask of you I am sure you will give it to the best of your judgment: but till then, pray let this subject be dropped between us, and I particularly request that it may not be mentioned to either of my parents—that above everything."

Till the hour of luncheon, Juliana remained invisible to her mother, having sent word that she was writing her letters, and

wished to be alone. The truth was that, secluded from all eyes, she was giving full way to the agony upon which she had during the last hour placed a violent and unnatural restraint. When, however, she came down-stairs, she appeared so perfectly self-possessed that her bearing became more than ever enigmatical to Claude Cotherstone.

During the afternoon Mrs. Leadstone made an attempt to draw her daughter into conversation on the subject of Frank, but it was met by the observation carelessly uttered, "Frank! Oh! you know, mother, I shall see him very soon."

"At Birmingham—eh, dearest?"

"Yes, Birmingham."

Then, as Juliana was departing, her eyes suffused with irrepressible tears, Mrs. Leadstone drew her—this time with unfeigned tenderness—to her heart, and silently kissed those tears away.

"She suffers," the conscience-stricken mother said to herself. "Ah! how much of this grief may be set down to my account!"

CHAPTER XLI.

THE reader will remember the incident of the "peppering" received by Frank Aylesmere and the head-keeper Mathew Gibson, in a certain "hot corner" of the Lentworth coverts. Mathew was the brother of Charlotte *née* Gibson, now Mrs. Bigge, of the Green Dragon, Dimborough. A great favourite was Mathew with Frank and Juliana, a master of his craft, and withal as honest a fellow as ever broke dog or collared poacher.

The keeper's lodge, erected under the present dynasty, was picturesquely situated in the midst of the higher woods, space from which had been cleared for the house and stables, a garden and a paddock—in all between three and four acres. The road leading up to it was never particularly good, owing to the quality of the soil, and its inaccessibility to the action of the wind. In wet weather it was such as feet encased in hob-nailed boots alone could traverse with ease. Along this road, however, early one afternoon—the afternoon, as it happened, of the identical Monday selected for the first night

of *Hamlet* at Manchester—a young lady, richly clad and lightly shod, might be seen cautiously picking her steps, and pausing from time to time, partly to rest, partly to look back suspiciously, as if fearful of being observed.

“Lawk, Jane! If here beant our young Missus a-comin’ up t’ road, and a pretty muck it’s in arter last night’s rain.” Thus Mathew to his wife, as the two stood at the lodge door.

“Surely it is Mrs. Aylesmere!” quoth Jane. “Go down, Mat—help the dear lady up. It’s a bit steep where she is.”

Mathew ran down to meet Juliana. “Who’d ha’ thought for to see you, mum!” he exclaimed. “If I might be so bold, please lean on my arm. You looks tired, mum—walkin’ wi’ ever so many hosses and men in they stables up at t’ house!”

“I came purposely alone, Mathew. I’m very glad to find you at home. I have something very particular to say to you.” There was a curt decisiveness in Juliana’s speech which effectually silenced Mathew, who, without replying, led her into the lodge, and placed her in his wooden arm-chair by the fire.

“Good afternoon, Mrs. Gibson,” Juliana began. “I’m here to ask Mathew’s assistance. I know I can trust you both. I would not ask you, Mathew, to do anything likely to displease my father: but I ask you to assist me in—in serving—Mr. Aylesmere.” A slight hesitation was perceptible in these last words. “I am going to meet him, and for reasons of my own I wish nobody—not a single person about the place—to know where I am going, when I go, or how I go! You understand me, Mathew?”

Oh, yes—Mathew understood her—she might depend on him for anything in mortal life to serve her or the young Squire, as the Lentworth people generally styled Frank. Pray what was it she wished him to do?

“It is this, Mathew. I am going to-night to Manchester. Here is Bradshaw’s Railway Guide. I am not able to make the route out exactly. As far as I can understand it, I must change the line three times, and have a good deal of waiting at the stations. But I cannot help that. Now, Mathew, look here”—pointing to the hieroglyphical pages with her gemmed finger. “I find I can neither take

the Middleford nor the Market Dimborough Stations, but must go more northward to the Bullfield Junction. I want you to go over, not to Middleford, but to Market Dimborough, and order a fly here to take me to Bullfield Junction. The train I go by is due at 9.29. I ought to be there by a quarter past nine."

It had taken Mathew some minutes to recover from the astonishment occasioned by young Missus' arrival on foot and alone at his lodge; but he was thrown into a state of indescribable mental confusion by the orders—for such he considered her request—thus imposed on him. Before offering a word of observation, he pulled out his spherical silver watch (inherited from his grandfather), and fell a reckoning on his fingers, occasionally expediting his calculations by scratching his head. Having arrived at what appeared a conclusion, he began, "It's now half arter three. I start a quarter afore four—hour and a half a-ridin' to Market Dimborough—quarter of an hour to get fly ready—fly'll take a good hour and three quarters a-comin' to fetch you, and every minute o' two hours to get you over to Bullfield Junction. Let me see—that makes—stop a bit! Stop a bit! Now don't ye 'urrying me, Jane!"

"Nonsense about hurrying you, Mat!" Jane exclaimed sharply; "you aint got the time as you think—why, you're a-bringin' Mrs. Aylesmere's startin' to a quarter to seven, and then a-gettin' her to Bullfield only just time to meet t' train."

"Jane's right, Mrs. Aylesmere, mum—she's right—she's better at figures nor I be. She allus checks my game book, she does. It's just what she says. We should only get you to Bullfield five minutes afore t' train's due, even supposin' all goes straight and smooth, with never a hitch on the road, which aint to be reckoned on with they flys and their broke-down hosses. No, no, mum, that'll never do. Please what may be the next train as is suitable?"

"I can make out none till the mail train, at some minutes after eleven. Too late—much too late, Mathew. I must catch the 9.29!"

Mathew first shook his head, then scratched it, finally scrubbing his thick crisp beard. "You'll be 'avin a lot o' luggage, mum," he presently said, "and the lady's maid, and one o' the men?"

"I have told you I wish to travel with secrecy. I am going alone—my luggage will consist of a single hand-bag."

"Phew! that's another pair o' shoes, mum. Alone! Who'd ha' thought it? Howsumever, it'll be ever so much easier to manage. Ah! now I've got it, clean as a whistle. O' course you don't want the fly to be driven up to t' house? Where did you think o' meetin' it, mum?"

"I could meet it quietly at the North Lodge. Robert Bailey and his wife now keep it, and you know they are to be trusted."

"Ay, ay, mum. Bob he be right enough. But look ye here. That won't give ye time—not by no manner o' means. Ye'll ha' to meet t' fly a good four or five miles along t' road. Here's my plan, mum. Jane can handle a trap as well as e'er a man about t' place. Now, it'll make less talk her drivin' ye nor what it'll do if I drives ye. So Jane she shall drive ye in my cart—Lord! that ever I should live to see our young Missus in that there cart! But that's neither here nor there. Jane shall drive ye, mum, to Blind Man's Gate. You know where that is, mum?"

"I know it well, Mathew—one of Sir Harry's meets. The Lentworth road there crosses the high road. It must be about half-way between Middleford and Bullfield. A very good notion. The next question is, where shall I meet Jane with the cart?"

Mathew scratched his head with the following result—
"Ye'll ha' to meet her down in the dingle, by the great gate out o' t' chase. That'll gi'e ye plenty o' time. Ye've no need for to start till a quarter afore eight."

"Very good, Mathew—a quarter before eight be it. I'm not quite certain about the exact spot you mean. When you have left for Market Dimborough Jane shall walk down with me, and point it out, so we shall be sure not to miss one another in the dark."

"Yes, mum, that'll be best. Jane, lass, ye'll tak t' old gray—ye know t' old gray mum, what t' young squire had throwd up last winter. I've broke 'im to harness. Holmes wouldn't ha' nothin' to say to t' old hoss, cause he warnt upstandin' enough for his stables. But I makes un woundy useful; and d'ye know, mum, it's lucky ye come to-day and not to-morrow, 'cause to-morrow we has a big day, a-drivin' partridges, and both me and the gray 'll be wanted. Old gray

takes t' cart wi' game and lunch. But, good Lord! I marn't stay 'ere a talkin', or I shall never get time enough to Market Dimborough. Here, Jane, lend us a hand, lass—my spurs! T' powney be apt to stumble on they roads—rotten as pears they be"—Then, as Jane helped him to buckle on his spurs—"Jane, I say—mind ye hold t' old hoss well on his legs, and keep 'un up to his bit."

"Ay, ay, Mat—don't be afeard," Jane replied with conviction. "Leave it to me—I know I can do it."

Mathew having started on his pony, Juliana walked with Mrs. Gibson down to the dingle. This appointed place of meeting proved to be well known to Juliana, though she had not recognised it from Mathew's description. The great gate he had mentioned was a white six-barred gate opening out of the copse still known by its ancient and loftier name of "Chase" upon a bye-lane leading up to the Lentworth road alluded to by Juliana. The two remained for some minutes talking, within the gate and on the border of the copse in question, about their rendezvous and the drive that was before them; Juliana being especially careful that every detail concerning the journey should be so thoroughly recapitulated as to be thoroughly impressed on Jane's mind, and leave no possibility of a misunderstanding. Having let Mrs. Aylesmere through the gate, and seen her set forward along the lane towards the Hall, Jane Gibson was returning to the lodge—her way being a wide straight green space cut through the wood, for the double purpose of shooting and timber carting—when suddenly she found herself face to face with—in her own phrase—"one of the gentlemen up at the house," carrying a gun, who had just stepped out of the copse.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Gibson," cried Claude Cotherstone—for he it was. "If you had been Mathew, and the time a few hours later, you'd have felt disposed to lay your hand on my collar. It is rather poacher-like to be in the woods with a gun in September. Fact is, I—Aw, Aw—went out for an hour or two thinking I might drop on a covey. I did mark one down—Aw, Aw—at the edge of one of the woods—haven't a ghost of an idea which—but I followed it up, and here have I been wandering about goodness knows how long. But for meeting you, shouldn't have known now where I am. I see it's the great ride in the upper woods—isn't it?"

"Yes, sir, quite right," Jane replied. "I'm a-goin' up to our lodge—Your way, if you want to get back to the house, is downwards."

"But I don't want to get back to the house, Mrs. Gibson—that is, not immediately. I want to see Mathew. The Squire asked me to see him, and ask him a question or two about to-morrow—the beat he means to take, and all that."

"Please, sir, Mathew's not at home."

"Ah! Out with his dogs, I suppose."—Jane was silent.

"Always at some work or another is your husband—first-rate keeper—Aw, Aw. Perhaps I might hit upon him in my walk. Any idea—Aw, Aw—in which direction he's likely to be?"

"No, sir, I really haven't."

"Do you—Aw, Aw—think he's anywhere off the estate?"

"He might be, sir, he's got a many things to do, and a many places to go to, has Mat."

"Ah! well, never mind. I suppose he'll be up at the house some time this evening. Perhaps you'll mention that I've had my gun loaded—not fired it off yet, though I may. I always like Mathew to see to my gun himself. Oh! by-the-bye"—suddenly turning upon her—"has Mrs. Leadstone been up at the lodge to-day?"

"No, sir, I haven't seed Mrs. Leadstone for many a day."

"Perhaps you have Mrs. Aylesmere?"

"Well, sir, we often sees Mrs. Aylesmere up our way."

"I thought she might—Aw, Aw—have gone up there this afternoon. I know she walked out in the direction of the upper wood. But you say you have not seen her—that's enough!" Here Claude stuck his glass in his eye, screwed up his cheek, and looked hard at the keeper's wife. Now, though Jane Gibson was competent to hold the old gray on his legs and keep him well up to his bit, and fully equal to the auditing of Mathew's game accounts, she was powerless to withstand Claude's eye formidably levelled at her through his glass, and forthwith, under the effects of that optical instrument of torture, she stammered out with palpable confusion that she did not recollect she had said she had not seen Mrs. Aylesmere—how, indeed, could she have said it, when the truth was Mrs. Aylesmere had been up at the lodge a while ago just for a few minutes?

“ Do you think you’re likely to see her again to-day ? ” asking which, Claude again looked fixedly through his glass at Mrs. Gibson.

“ I might see Mrs. Aylesmere, sir. Please have you any message I could give her ? ” Jane had summoned up courage to say this with relative composure, and a certain assumed simplicity, as a suspicion crossed her naturally acute mind that the tall, bearded gentleman up at the house was endeavouring to “ pump ” her, this suspicion being associated with a recollection that this same gentleman was not held in much favour by her husband.

But Claude had gathered from Jane Gibson’s answers to his questions quite sufficient to convince him that she was true to the trust he knew to have been reposed in her by Mrs. Aylesmere. The fact was that he had this afternoon followed Juliana from the house, at a distance, taking his gun as a pretext ; had, in spite of her precautions, watched her into the keeper’s lodge, himself waiting in the copse till she came out accompanied by Mathew and Jane ; had seen Mathew start on his pony ; and had afterwards, hidden within the copse, overheard the conversation between Juliana and Jane Gibson, thus discovering the object of Mathew’s ride to Middleford.

Telling Mrs. Gibson, then, that he had no message for Mrs. Aylesmere, whom he should probably himself see before she (Mrs. Gibson) would see her, he dismounted his optical apparatus, flung his gun over his shoulder, and departed in the direction of the Hall.

The result of the thoughts that, during the walk, coursed one another through his busy brain, was thus expressed by himself to himself—“ She has more nerve than I gave her credit for. We shall see whether it will serve her to the end ! ”

Arrived in his own room, some minutes past four o’clock, he summoned his servant, Bloss, gave the man some hurried but very particular orders, and then wrote the three following notes :—

MY DEAR SQUIRE,—A letter just received from Win. obliges me to start at once. I have taken the liberty, in the absence of all proper authorities, to order the dog-cart to take me to the station.—Always truly yours, C. C.

MY DEAR MRS. LEADSTONE,—When you return home I shall

have departed, in compliance with my brother's pressing request. I regret to leave you in the midst of *your perplexities*, though I fear no efforts of mine can now avail much. I take the liberty of leaving my servant to follow with my traps to-morrow.—Very sincerely yours, C. COTHERSTONE.

P. S.—I will ask you to bear my excuses to Mrs. Saville—my plea *force majeure*.

MY DEAR MRS. AYLESmere,—I regret that I am imperatively called upon to start without a word of farewell. Who knows when or where we may meet again?—Always devotedly yours, CLAUDE.

These missives were respectively delivered, to the Squire, when he returned from a distant business ride; to Mrs. Leadstone, when she returned from a state visit—in the barouche and four, driven postillion—several miles off; to Juliana, who was up-stairs, having told her maid to say she was fatigued, and unable to see any one.

Under existing circumstances, Claude's sudden departure, though tinged with a certain colouring of mystery, was regarded by all three rather as a relief than otherwise.

The entire house party being engaged that evening to a ball given by the Savilles, dinner was ordered for a quarter past six. Juliana had, in the morning, told her mother she did not feel equal to the ball, an announcement which, occasioning Mrs. Leadstone little surprise, was not much commented on by her.

“ I hope you'll go early to bed, dearest,” the latter had said ; “ you want rest.”

“ I do, mother—of the mind and heart.”

“ Ah ! would I could do something for you, Juliana ! ”

“ Mother, I must act for myself in future, and I will. Too much has been already done for me. I mean not this as a reproach. What has been done I believe has been done with the best intentions. There, mother ! Let us not return to the subject. Think not I am wanting in affection, if I ask you just now not to take any particular notice of my actions—never mind what they may be.”

Mrs. Leadstone was too conscious of the little success that had hitherto attended her efforts for Juliana's happiness—too much oppressed by the sense of her own in-

competence to deal with the difficulties she had herself raised—not to give a ready assent to Juliana's request.

After dinner Juliana sought her father, but with him she was unable to preserve the calm demeanour she had maintained towards her mother. The Squire, seeing tears on her eye-lids, kissed her tenderly. "God bless you, my darling!" he said. "I don't like your being left so lonely to-night. I'm afraid it's a toss-up whether you're best with your own thoughts or with a lot o' people you don't care a fig for. But I suppose a fortnight will set all right."

"A fortnight will—decide my fate, father!" As she thus spoke, she turned her countenance aside.

"Oh! come, come! Don't say that so sorrowful—once get away from this, and have your Frank all to yourself——"

"Father, you know not what you are saying, indeed you do not." And she burst into tears.

The Squire certainly did not know what he had been saying, in the sense that the effect upon Juliana of the speech he had meant to be consoling to her utterly bewildered him. Fearing lest a similar result might follow any further efforts to comfort his manifestly sorrowing child, he again kissed her—this time in a silence which remained unbroken by him till she left him, her parting words being, "I told my mother this morning I meant to take the management of my own affairs into my own hands, and I do mean it. Henceforth, father, be not surprised at anything you may hear of me—neither be alarmed—rest assured all is done for the best!"

CHAPTER XLII.

IMMEDIATELY on Mathew Gibson's return from Market Dim-borough, his wife related to him the incident of her meeting with Claude in the wood, recapitulating all that he had said to her, and expressing her conviction that he had intended to "pump" her about Mrs. Aylesmere.

Having heard his wife to the end, Mathew slapped his thigh, and uttered an oath of the milder category, but for the moment said nothing more.

"I know he's no favourite o' yourn, Mat," Jane resumed, and that made me so short wi' 'im."

“No favourite, lass—I hates ’im like p’ison. And now I’ll tell ye summat I’s e allus kep to myself. It was this Honourable Cotherstone as shot t’ young Squire that day in the high woods. Ay, t’war Bob Bailey war his loader, and he seed as Bob seed he’d done’t—so then what does he do, but he tips Bob two suvrins, which Bob he understood it war to make ’im hold his tongue, and let folk think how Reverend St. Ives done it. From the first I suspected this here Lord’s son had done’t, I did—and I stuck to Bob till he tell’d I what he seed. Now, lass, why d’ye think I suspected ’im? Well, I’ll tell ye. Sister Charlotte let I into a bit o’ a secret how this here Lord’s son wanted our young lady, as then was, for his wife, and how Madam spoke up for the Honourable, but Miss Juliana didn’t see it, and chose to foller her own fancy, which was the young Squire—and right she was so to do, say I. Then, o’ course, he grow’d jealous o’ Mr. Frank, and so, ye see, gettin’ this here chance, let fly at ’im, thinkin, may be, at the least to spile his beauty—may be worse, to make t’ young wife a young widder. The Lord alone knows t’ extent o’ his wickedness!”

“Mat, Mat! Do you mean to say how that’s all true as you’re a tellin’ me?”

“True as gospel readin’, Jane. If ill had come o’ Mr. Francis’s wound, Bob war ready for to come forward and swear how he seed the Lord’s son a-shiftin’ on to t’ parson’s ground while t’ parson’s back war turned, takin’ that ’ere shot—then steppin’ back quick as quick to ’is own ground. But Mr. Francis soon got right, and nothing more ’ad to be said.”

“Well, Mat, I be mortal glad young Missus be a-goin’ away to jine t’ young Squire at Manchester, and get properly looked arter; for it ain’t right her bein’ left here, gallanted by one and gallanted by t’ other, while her own lawful husband’s miles and miles away—play-actin’, the y say he is, and for what she knows gallantin’ they godless stage hussies!”

“It ain’t right, Jane, and it ain’t clear to me how it all come about—thof I’ve got my suspicions. Like enough, if Charlotte hadn’t got married, as dared to speak her mind to her own Missus—ay, and to old Madam too, she did—a deal o’ this wouldn’t ha’ comed about. Ye’ll remember Charlotte told us ever so many times Mrs. Leadstone couldn’t abide Mr. Francis, and allus played up to Honourable Cotherstone. Why, there aint a sarvint in t’ house but sees t’ old missus and t’ young

Squire ain't never been cater cousins, as one may say. Now, it's Phibbs's belief she pushed him so hard as it warn't in flesh and blood to stand her temper—and that's why he started off. Ay, Phibbs hisself told me that, and I think how Phibbs knows as much as most people what goes on up at t' Hall. Howsum-ever, we all on us know t' young Squire and t' young Missus be a-goin' to live away from t' Hall and the big London house—and a good thing too—till it please God to take t' old Squire. Not but what he's a master none can complain of—though it stands to reason a Leadstone can't be such a thorough-bred un as a Aylesmere. Now, lass, sin' I must go up to t' Hall some time this arternoon, I'll do't at once. I'd like to know whether anything have got out among t' sarvints about this queer move o' t' young Missus—a runnin' away, like, from her father to her husband under cover o' night—a move as I can't say seems fittin' or proper—though o' course she've got her reasons for't."

This little harangue concluded, Mathew donned his best velveteen jacket and his newest hat, and set forth towards the house. Passing through the stable yard, he saw the dog-cart, in which were a number of travelling bags and cases, ready to be driven round to the front door.

"Good arternoon, Mr. Holmes," he said, walking into the stable.

"How are you, Mr. Gibson?" quoth Holmes, who stood, leaning against a stall pillar, smoking his pipe after having superintended the putting-to of the equipage. "So here's one o' your crack shots a-goin' away. Oh, yes, off like 'is own breech-loader. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Which might that be, Mr. Holmes?"

"Honourable Mr. Cotherstone."

"Ye don't say it, Mr. Holmes!"

"Yes, but I does. He come round hisself and said how he'd just got a letter quite unexpectedly from Lord Windlesham—that's his brother, you know—eldest son o' the Earl o' Battle borough"—Holmes piqued himself on being rather well up in the peerage—"and must start off at once—how it was fortunate he had found me—for you know Missus and the ladies is out with the barouche and the two lads, all the way to Uphanger—as I could take on me to do what others mightn't, and would I let him have the dog-cart to go in? O' course I

couldn't refuse—why should I?—more partic'lar as he tipped me a sovereign—which, no doubt, he's the gentleman all over—thof a bit of a big-wig with that confounded glass as the swells wears—for no airthly reason, as I can make out, but to show they are swells—Ha! ha! ha! Why don't nobody *but* swells ever wear they ridic'lous things? It aint the cost o' the article—cause they're cheaper nor a good honest pair o' spectacles—just one bit o' glass and a ha'porth o' black string."

"Did he say where he's a-goin' to, Holmes?"

"No, and o' course it warn't for me to ask. I say, Mathew, has he done the handsome by you?" Here Mr. Holmes illustratively exhibited a sovereign between his thumb and forefinger.

"Oh, I haven't got to complain o' Honourable Cotherstone, Holmes."

"But I mean to-day? He beant a-goin' away without seein' you, I s'pose?"

"I've no partic'lar wish to see 'im, Holmes—rayther contrariwise. I've my reasons."

"Well, man, that's your look-out. Anyhow, he's off for good now."

"What makes ye think that?"

"Why, I said, says I, 'Sir, you're sure not a-goin' away for so long but ye'll be back for some o' master's airly cover shootin', I s'pose'—and he says, says he, 'Holmes, I've got so much cover shootin' I'm promised to this season, I don't think it's possible for me to be back at Lentworth.' And Bloss told me he was a-goin' for to stay till to-morrow, and then follow to Lord Windlesham's with the portmanteaus and big things. So, you see, he's what one may call off for good."

"It's come partic'lar sharp, Holmes, this start o' hisn. Why, will ye believe it?—He war up at my place a-talkin' to Jane not three hours ago—told her he wanted for to see me about to-morrow—we're a-goin' to drive partridges—the beat I meant, and such like."

"Bloss told me his master was took all aback by a letter what he'd brought him from the post-office—came by some cross post or other—and that's since he was up at your place."

We see Mr. Bloss was in his master's confidence to the compromising extent of being instructed to tell lies in support of that master's schemes.

And now Mr. Holmes, having consulted the stable-yard clock, ordered the groom in charge of the dog-cart to go round, the hour being half-past five, that named by Mr. Cotherstone for his departure.

Mathew, when he had ascertained the departure of "the Lord's son" to be an accomplished fact, sought Mr. Phibbs's sanctuary. He found the butler in the midst of his plate and his dinner preparations. Phibbs was one whose equanimity it was difficult to overbalance, and he now stalked solemnly to and fro in the performance of his functions, not in the least flurried by the concurrence of two such unusual incidents as the departure of a guest at half-past five p.m. and a large dinner at half-past six.

"Afraid I might be in your way, Mr. Phibbs," Mathew said.

"Not a bit of it, Mr. Gibson, not a bit of it—always glad to see you." Then, looking out from the pantry door—"Here, William! A pint o' old ale for Mr. Gibson, before you bring in tray—Look sharp! Well, Mr. Gibson, I don't expect to see your bag to-morrow such a good un as it should ha' been—your best shot called away all on a sudden."

"That's what Holmes have been a-tellin' me. It took me all of a heap--s'pose it surprised you?"

"I'm not easy surprised. All right, William—set it down by Mr. Gibson."

"No, thank ye, William," said the keeper, taking the ale, "I aint a-goin' to stop long. I've got summat partic'lar to look arter to-night."

"Poachers, Gibson?"

"Well, summat o' that sort," with a grim smile.

"As I was sayin', Gibson, I'm not easy surprised. I've lived too much among the gentry to mind their choppings and changings, orderings and unorderings. I takes things pretty much as they comes. To be sure Mr. Cotherstone's rather irregular even for one of the gentry. He's of the free-and-easy sort, and he's made pretty well at home here, you see."

"Makes hisself pretty well at home, Phibbs—that's what I should say."

"Ay, ay, Mathew; but people doesn't make themselves at home unless they're let do it, any more among the gentry than among us. Here, now, is my pantry"—with a wave of the plate leather he held—"I'm master o' my pantry, and d'ye think anybody makes hisself at home here unless I choose to let him? There's your lodge—ain't you cock o' that walk? To be sure you are. It's the same in Missus' drorin-room, and not more in Missus' than in all the drorin-rooms in the world."

"Quite so, Mr. Phibbs. I'm sure I don't call to mind any o' the gentry a-visitin' here as has been let make so free as this Honourable Cotherstone."

"Right you are, Gibson, and it was only yesterday I 'inted something o' that kind to Bloss—Bloss is the closest man in my line as I ever come across. No doubt he've got a right good place—wages, cast-offs, commissions quite fust-rate. Well, Bloss he laughed, and said never a word beyond he begged leave to drink the 'ealth—for we was over a bottle o' wine at the 'ousekeeper's room table—of the old Squire and the young one—as he was sorry to learn was a-goin' to separate. And that we know they are—ay, and a precious good thing too—take my word for that!"

"Good! I believe you, Phibbs!"

"Ought to ha' been done long ago. In course, Gibson, you've heard a thing or two from your sister Charlotte—a right good girl that! A great loss to us here—Ed'ard was a wide-awake chap—besides getting into flesh, he knowed Charlotte's wally."

"About the two Squires partin', Phibbs, you're puttin' the right saddle on the wrong hoss. It ain't Master and Mr. Francis as ought to part, but the two Missuses—that is, speakin' exacly, the old Missus and Mrs. Francis. And, by-the-bye, how is Mrs. Aylesmere this arternoon?"

"Only so so, Gibson, as she has been a long time. No nder, neither. Ah! that play-actin'! All along o' that y-actin'. Ever since Mr. Frank took to that play-actin', igs seem to ha' gone wrong. I'm sure I dunno what the onel would ha' said if he knowed o' his nevvys bein' so g away from young Missus. I do believe he'd ha' come n and blowed up—Ah! I know *who* he'd ha' pitched into

about it—and that's the right party—the party you said I ought to ha' put the saddle on, Mathew—the party who worked Mr. Francis up to fever 'eat—got this play-actin' again into his 'ead; you see it was nat'ral—she allus a-goin' on at him about the money all bein' Leadstone money—and he havin' a independent spirit of his own, he should be glad to airn money, and thereby snap his fingers at her and her Leadstone money—and then, I say, contrived as he should go away and leave young Missus at home along o' her."

"Ay, Phibbs, and mark me—that there party might ha' consequences to answer for as she little thinks on!"—these last words pronounced slowly and oracularly. "D'ye know, I'm minded by that there party o' one o' my stoopid hen pheasants as 'll run about chuck-chuckin' among her chicks, and never sees the cunnin' old dog-fox as is a-pretendin' to be asleep on the bank, and thinkin' to hissself what a rare meal he's goin' to make out o' that young brood."

Phibbs, whose attention had been arrested by Mathew's very oracular manner, stopped in the act of taking down a silver salver from his plate closet, and with the piece of richly-chased silver still elevated in the air, uttered a prolonged whistle.

"You sees what I mean, eh, Phibbs?"

"I do—I do. I never thought you so 'cute, Mathew Gibson. It's the instinct you gets from the creeturs you have to do with. Well, now, arter what you've said, I'll tell you my old Colonel got the same notion into his head—that he did—and told me on it one day when, since I come here, I went to pay my respects to him. He said he'd got it when he met Mr. Cotherstone and young Missus a-ridin' together in the park. He said it warn't right, and he'd speak about it to his nevvie, but I believe he never did. Colonel Briarly's a gentleman as don't like trouble."

"The Colonel thought that, did he, Phibbs? Then depend on't where there's so much smoke there's fire." As Mathew thus spoke, he started up, and having tossed up the remainder of his ale, exclaimed, "I must be a-goin' about my business, and leave you to yourn. Good evening, Phibbs; you dunno what a twist you give me tellin' me what the Colonel said."

"I hope it's not an unpleasant twist, Gibson. I'm afeard,

though, it ain't a particular pleasant one, by the looks of you." For Mathew had stood during several moments desperately scratching his head, and scrubbing his beard. In fact, he was in the throes of a new idea.

"Yes, that's it—that's it," he said, as if unconscious of Phibbs's presence.

"What's it?" the latter asked.

"I begs parding, Mr. Phibbs," he replied, "I was only a-thinkin'. Good evenin' to you." With which he strode out of the pantry, as if the new idea had been a wounded rabbit that he was anxious to bag before it could struggle into a burrow.

Juliana had excused herself from the dinner-table, and ordered tea to be taken up to her own room. At a quarter before eight she dismissed Marly for the night. Having made such little preparations for her journey as she required, she quitted her room at eight. All was silent in the passage. The dinner was still going on, and none of the men servants were about, either on the staircase or in the hall; after softly descending the one, and crossing the other, she passed quietly out of the house.

Greatly to her surprise she found Mrs. Gibson waiting on the lawn in front.

"It's me, mum," Jane whispered. 'I'm a-goin' to walk wi' you down to the dingle. Mathew's made up his mind to drive you hisself."

"Well, Mathew knows best," Juliana said.

"That he does, mum, you may be sure. Let me help you with your things."

"I haven't much, Mrs. Gibson—only a fur cloak and this bag."

"I've put a big shawl into the cart, mum, for to wrap round your feet. Lucky the night's fine and mild. Lean on my arm, mum."

"No, thank you. I have taken rest and am prepared for exertion."

And so it was that the heiress of Lentworth went forth to meet the husband from whom she had only been separated

through culpable maternal folly, moulded by odious machinations, to an infernal purpose.

CHAPTER XLIII.

MRS. LUTTREL! Mrs. Luttrel! Please a word with you! Oh, oh! whatever *can* it mean?"

"What can *what* mean, Mrs. Marly?" asked the housekeeper tartly of Juliana's maid, who had rather dragged than led her into the housekeeper's room, at a few minutes past ten on the morning after the Savilles' ball.

"Oh, my Missus! My dear Missus!" cried Marly, clasping her hands pathetically.

"Ill, Marly?"

"No, no! Gone! gone!"

"Gone! Where?"

"Oh! I don't know—How should I know?"

"What a downright fool the girl is!"

"A fool, Mrs. Luttrel!"—this with much offended dignity—"for not knowing why my Missus has not slept in her bed."

"Perhaps she slept on the sofa," suggested Luttrel with provoking calmness.

"She hasn't slept at all—leastways not here."

"Not here, Marly?"

"No. The bed hasn't been slept in—and she's gone."

"Gone! Gracious goodness! Let me go up to her room. Come, Marly—this is very strange."

"Strange!—it's dreadful."

Housekeeper and lady's maid together ascended to Julia's apartment. They searched bedroom, dressing-room, boudoir, less for the missing lady than for some letter or other indication likely to throw light upon the cause of her departure and the course she had taken; but they found nothing.

"We had better see what she's took with her in the wardrobe-clothing," quoth Luttrel.

Accordingly they proceeded to inspect wardrobes, drawers, and boxes.

The result of this search was thus expressed by Marly, "Why, she seems to have took next to nothing—beyond what's at the wash, I can't make out but just a change. To think of a lady with such a lot o' beautiful things of all sorts goin' away and takin' no more than just one change!"

"Now, the question is, what's to be done?" said Luttrell, seating herself, less for the purpose of reflection than of repose, for, being stout and inactive, this unwonted rapidity of movement had occasioned her no little weariness.

"You'll tell Missus the first thing, won't you, Mrs. Luttrell?"

"Hum! Shall I or shan't I? P'raps I'd better see Master first. He won't take on as Missus will, poor thing! But now, Marly—stay, shut that door—some of the housemaids might be listenin'. You know the first question as'll be asked is sure to be this, who saw her last in the house?"

"Oh! Mrs. Luttrell! you don't mean that anybody will suspect me of—oh, my goodness! I'm as innocent as the babe unborn. Oh Lord! oh Lord! Surely nobody will suspect me!"

"Once more, Marly, don't be a fool! Who's goin' to suspect you of any mortal thing? Only, you see, they'll be sure to ask whether she said anythink to anybody. Not as it's the least bit likely she would speak to you about any plan she might have in her head; for of all the ladies I ever come across Mrs. Aylesmere is the most shut up in herself, and particular so since Mr. Aylesmere's been away. I don't believe there's a mortal creature in the house as is like to throw any light on this dark business—for it is a dark business, Marly, depend on that—exceptin' one!"

"And pray who's that?" asked Marly.

"Ah, Marly! Marly! Do you know, the horridest o' thoughts has just come across my poor bewildered brain—it has indeed;" and Luttrell's usually rubicund countenance assumed momentarily a pallid hue.

"You do look as if your brain had got a bit bewildered, Mrs. Luttrell. What might that horridest o' thoughts be, if you please?"

"It's this, Marly—about Mr.—Mr. Cotherstone——"

"Pray what about Mr. Cotherstone?"

"Well, he's the one I meant as like to throw light on the business."

“ But you forget, Luttrel, he’s not in the house—he left yesterday afternoon.”

“ I know that—and didn’t he leave all of a sudden—at a few minutes’ warnin’? Just think o’ that, and tell me if it doesn’t all look very strange !”

“ Strange, Luttrel! Why, you never mean as how Mr. Cotherstone’s for anything in Mrs. Aylesmere’s leavin’? ”

“ I’m sure I don’t know what I do mean—my poor head’s all dizzy, as I think what’s possible.”

“ But you don’t think anything wrong’s possible? Oh! no! no! Mrs. Aylesmere’s not like some o’ them ladies as come here. She is quite another sort. There’s not many as Mr. Aylesmere might ha’ left alone and gentlemen coming and going—and, above all, Mr. Coth——Oh! Luttrel! Luttrel!—*now* a horrid thought has come across *my* brain! I just remember how yesterday, after lunch, I dressed Missus for walkin’—strong boots, short gown. Well, I see her go up the holly walk, and watched her out o’ sight, when who should presently go a-followin’ like after her, and walkin’ ever so fast, but Mr. Cotherstone himself! ”

Luttrel clasped her fat hands, and sank back in her chair, exclaiming, “ Then, as sure as the ’evins is above us, Mr. Cotherstone knows where she’s gone to—if he isn’t gone with her! ”

“ Only, Mrs. Luttrel,” said Marly sturdily—for she knew the housekeeper bore Juliana no great love—“ be sure o’ this: I won’t say but Mr. Cotherstone may mean Mrs. Aylesmere harm—I’ve no great opinion of him, no more than I have of his fine smooth-tongued Mr. Bloss.—But Mrs. Aylesmere has no more thought o’ harm than Mrs. Leadstone herself! ”

“ Oh! that I believe,” Luttrel hastened to say, “ and even if I did not, I’d swear I do, for the honour of the good house I serve. I think, Marly, nothin’ less is the dooty of servants to such a Master and Missus as we’ve got. But, between you and me, it does look very queer, their both disappearin’ the same day—he startin’ quite unexpected like, and she as clean off in the night as if she’d been hocuss-pocussed away by a conjuror! ”

The course ultimately decided on as the fittest to be adopted was that Marly should observe a strict silence on the subject

of her Mistress's disappearance, and that Luttrell should inform Mrs. Leadstone of it, leaving her to take what steps might seem good to her.

Mrs. Leadstone heard the news with a terror that, for some minutes, paralysed her power of thought. Luttrell, influenced by the love of the marvellous natural to her sex, and the coarseness of feeling incidental to her station, unintentionally so mixed up Cotherstone's name with her story, that her hearer was insensibly led to suspect him to be in some way connected with Juliana's disappearance. When she had rallied from the first effects of the shock, she affected to treat the affair lightly, saying, "Be sure, Luttrell, we shall have news of her by to-morrow's post. In the meantime, I rely upon you to say nothing at all about the business—not to anybody whatever! Should Mrs. Aylesmere's departure be talked of downstairs, and you be asked any questions, say——" She paused.

"Say what, if you please, ma'am?"

After some reflection, Mrs. Leadstone resumed, "Say she has gone—rather sooner than was originally proposed—to meet Mr. Aylesmere." Then to herself fervently—"As God in His mercy grant may be the case! But, oh! if it be otherwise!"

Mrs. Leadstone appeared at the breakfast-table with more rouge than usual to conceal the unwonted pallor of her countenance, and wearing an uneasy mask of cheerfulness. It was only by a strong effort that she could keep her attention upon the conversation in which she was expected to take a part; more than once, too, she felt so faint and sick that it became absolute torture to her to sit at the table.

It happened that the Squire had taken an early breakfast, and gone out for a long day's business; so there was a temporary respite for her as far as he was concerned.

The Savilles' ball not having ended till past three, the Lentworth party had not retired to bed till nearly five. The men, who were going to shoot troubled themselves not about the ladies, but took their breakfast and departed when it pleased them so to do.

Of the ladies, some came down tardily, others took breakfast in their own rooms. As there was no reason why Juliana

might not be among the latter, the former made no enquiries about her.

No general reunion of the party took place before half-past two, at the luncheon table, so till then there would be no opportunity for enquiries respecting Juliana's non-appearance.

Such enquiries, even, Mrs. Leadstone contrived to prevent, by pretending fatigue, and sending word to her principal lady guest that she should not appear at luncheon. It was, then, assumed, without enquiry, that Juliana and her mother were upstairs together.

Mrs. Leadstone had been further aided by the two servants who were in her confidence. Marly, with Luttrell's connivance, had kept the key of Juliana's room, telling the housemaid she would do all that was necessary for her mistress, who was too unwell to be disturbed. These two women threw equal zeal into their support of the fiction put forward, though from different motives. Marly loved her mistress, and believed firmly in her. Luttrell doubted Juliana, but she felt it her duty, as she has herself asserted, to do all in her power for the honour of the family she served.

Late in the afternoon Mrs. Leadstone, happening to look from her window, was surprised to see her husband walking with another gentleman in the garden, apparently coming in the direction of the house. As they were yet at some distance, she was unable to recognise Mr. Leadstone's companion, though she found cause for a cowardly hope of some further respite in the simple fact that he was bringing home a companion.

She sat down to think over the manner in which, when the fatal moment should come, she could best clothe to him the terrible news. It was a novel situation for her to be looking forward with alarm to an encounter with him ; but she had no room for such minor subjects of thought amid the great terror that possessed her. For, in truth, the more she passed and repassed the subject of Juliana's disappearance in her mind, the less she found herself associating the event with Frank Aylesmere, and the more with Claude Cotherstone.

Presently there was a knock at her door, and a housemaid entered, announcing that " Master " would be glad to see her as soon as she could come down, in his room.

She turned cold and faint. The message indicated

either that all hope of further respite was over, or that Leadstone was already, from some source or another, informed of what had occurred. She desired the housemaid to say she would be down in five minutes. She required all those five minutes to nerve herself for the meeting.

On entering Mr. Leadstone's room, Mrs. Leadstone found him standing before the fire-place, while, seated in an arm-chair, beside the table, was Colonel Briarly, Frank's uncle, sipping weak brandy and water, decanters and glasses for which were placed on the table.

The Colonel rose stiffly, bowed still more stiffly, hoped Mrs. Leadstone was well, and reseated himself.

Leadstone placed his wife a chair, walked to the door to ascertain that it was properly closed, came near her, and asked sternly, "What have you to tell us about Juliana?"

Mrs. Leadstone looked piteously towards Colonel Briarly, hoping to find in his countenance some enlightenment as to the nature of the knowledge on the subject which she saw was possessed by her husband and shared by him, the Colonel.

But the latter rested, with closed eyes and averted mien, on the arm of his chair.

"Juliana," Mrs. Leadstone replied, "is not here."

"Is that all you know?" Leadstone demanded.

"It is."

"You know nothing about the preparations she made?"

"I cannot learn that she made any. She has taken scarcely anything with her."

"You don't know how she got over to Bullfield Junction?"

"I repeat that I know nothing—absolutely nothing. But what do *you* know about Bullfield Junction?"

"Colonel," Leadstone said, turning towards the ex-warrior, "p'raps you'll oblige me by telling Mrs. Leadstone all you saw at Bullfield Junction."

The Colonel drew himself up, took a sip of his favourite beverage, and thus began: "I'll do my best, Mrs. Leadstone, but I'm afraid that won't be good for much. You behold in me a man overpowered by excitement. At my time of life, Ma'am, the nervous system is easily overtaxed. Now, pray—pray, Mrs. Leadstone, don't flurry me—I see you are nervous, and I can't wonder at it. Well, Ma'am, though you

now see me at Lentworth Hall, I am on my way from Scarborough to Leamington, whither I am going for the benefit of the waters. Truly a circumbendibus, but one forced upon me by the very unpleasant circumstances in which I—rather in which *we*, speaking of ourselves as connected by family ties—a family tie, rather—that tie too often made hastily, unreflectingly, and afterwards broken disgracefully—I allude to the tie of marriage. Ah! you are growing more nervous—I don't wonder—you also, Mr. Leadstone. But pray restrain yourselves—you see how nervous I am. If you flurry me you'll simply overpower me, and then the devil a word more will you get out of me—excuse my forcible expression. Well, Ma'am, you have a Junction station hereabouts—let me see. What did I hear you call it, Mr. Leadstone? ”

“ Bullfield Junction !” the impatient Squire roared out.

“ Pray, Sir, be calm, for the sake of my nerves,” said the Colonel waspishly. “ I'm not deaf—only nervous. Bullfield Junction, then. The train I was in—East Midland—West Midland—I forget which exactly—some cross or loop line deposited me last night at—the time being, to the best of my recollection, eight fifty-eight in their barbarous railway jargon—this same Bullton—Bullfield Junction. I had to wait something like an hour and three quarters for a train going South. Of course I had my servant with me—the man who succeeded Phibbs—at my time of life no man is safe without his servant—no woman either—so I had no bother in looking after my own luggage. The darkness of that station—owing to the paucity or the inferiority of the gas—is positively Cimmerian, as my nephew, who is a good classic, would say—impossible to read a book or paper. As to the seats, such as are not dilapidated are comfortless, such as might be comfortable are dilapidated—nothing left me but to walk up and down the platform, watching the trains up—down—across.

“ That platform, by the way, is narrow and inconvenienced in the extreme. Porters wheel things against you without warning—a fellow did this to me—nearly knocked me down, but really knocked me against another traveller, walking, like myself.

Who should this other traveller be but—Mr. Claude Cotherstone! You start, Mrs. Leadstone. I see you're more nervous than ever. I really don't wonder. How you ever could encourage such a scamp as Claude Cotherstone to be a tame cat in your house, and dangle after—— But I won't anticipate. Well, he asked me where I was going—what train, and so on. I forget which way he said he was going—quite the reverse of mine. But no matter what he said, as of course he told a lie. He didn't seem anxious to prolong the conversation with me, but was clearly very anxious about something else. I soon perceived he was on the look-out for somebody else. I troubled myself no more about him—continued my walk. By-and-bye up comes a train—Goodness knows for where—though of course we can ascertain if any evidence is hereafter required—Ah! that notion makes you still more nervous, Ma'am. Quite understand it. Well, fellows bawl out a dozen names, not one of which one can catch. This train proved to be the one Cotherstone was looking out for. But he seemed in no haste to get in—not he. The fellow looked up—down—round—on a sudden he makes a rush towards a lady. Ah, you're getting more and more nervous, Ma'am. But—pray think of *my* nerves, and be calm. I drew near him—for I own I was a little curious to get a sight of his lady—little dreaming of the cold douche I was going to get. Better take my vinaigrette, Mrs. Leadstone. Being of a nervous temperament, I always carry one——”

“Colonel Briarly, for the love of Heaven, don't torture me! Go on! go on!” Mrs. Leadstone exclaimed, clasping her hands in unaffected agony.

“Now, I implore you, Ma'am, to consider my nerves as well as your own. I'm utterly unequal to anything in the way of a scene. Imitate your husband.” The Squire had buried his countenance in his clenched hands, and was violently forcing himself to hear the Colonel's prolix narrative without interrupting him. “Let me see! Where was I? Oh! the lady. Well, the lady had to speak with a man carrying a shawl or something who seemed to have come with her, and to do that she was obliged to lift her veil, which was a thick one—madam, the raising of that veil showed me

the features of your daughter—my niece by marriage. And further madam, these eyes saw that lady enter a first-class carriage—an empty first-class carriage—followed by that Honourable scoundrel, Claude Cotherstone—and the porter shut the carriage door after them ! There's my story, Mrs. Leadstone—make what you can of it—put a head to it, a tail to it, explain it, if you can. Such as it is, the incidents comprising it seemed so little satisfactory to me—I may say, so particularly unsatisfactory—that knowing myself to be within a few miles of Lentworth, I decided not to leave the country without seeing you ; so, instead of continuing my journey to Leamington, I passed the night at a public-house dignified with the title of the Junction Hotel. I trust in heaven I may not have caught an access of rheumatism in the infernal bedroom they put me into—I beg pardon for the strong expression, Mrs. Leadstone, but my nerves carry me away. It was all doors, windows, posts, and canopy—one of those dreadful old four-posters, Ma'am, with a feather bed that makes you a sort of a Turkish bath, and a knotted counterpane that seems to weigh a quarter of a ton, and to be as stiff as so much oak-bark. But to wind up, and account for my presence here, in Mr. Leadstone's company. On rising after the most sleepless night I ever remember to have passed, I heard from my servant that Mr. Leadstone had been seen to drive past the inn, on his way to some place or another—everybody's movements are known to somebody else in the country—one of my reasons for detesting a country life—and they told me Squire Leadstone would be sure to return—some man appeared to have heard it who had spoken to his groom about a sack of something for the stable—by the same road. I then determined to wait and waylay him for the purpose of discussing this wretched business. I did so, and nothing would satisfy him but to drop his groom, and bring me on here, to learn what you know about it, and concert measures for—for I hardly know what. In fact, the wisest of us is unable to throw out a single idea till we know what we really have to deal with, and hear more of these, I—I'm afraid I must say fugitives !”

After this Mrs. Leadstone, with as much calmness as she could summon up, related how, owing to the precautions

which the housekeeper and Marly had taken, Juliana's departure was, up to the present time, a secret. She heard with satisfaction that the Colonel had been prevailed upon to stay the night at Lentworth, seeing in this new arrival an incident likely to occupy the party already assembled, and to prevent curiosity from wandering in the direction of Juliana's apartment.

The Colonel himself had readily accepted Leadstone's invitation. Wearied by his exertions in what he was pleased to describe to himself as the cause of others, but which was, in point of fact, the cause of his own family honour, he rejoiced at the prospect of concluding his day with a dinner, cooked by a *chef* well known to him, crowned by wines of the first quality, the whole to be wound up by a night in a bed which he knew by anticipation to be in every respect the exact reverse he had last occupied, and the familiar valeting of Phibbs in the morning.

As to Mr. Leadstone, if it had happened that his first information of Juliana's mysterious departure had been received from Mrs. Leadstone, he would have set the event down to some mistaken and exaggerated feeling, and no more; but the Colonel's downright and minute relation of what he had witnessed with his own eyes, taken in conjunction with the fact of Claude's hasty departure from Lentworth, fairly staggered him. Unskilled as he was in female character, he feared to ask himself how far, between Frank's absence and Claude's insinuating manners, Juliana's impulsive and susceptible nature might have been wrought upon to do that the bare thought of which caused his strong heart to sink within him.

The weariness resulting from the previous night's exertion sent the ladies early to bed. The men, occupied with their whist and their billiards, their cigars and their grog, troubled themselves little about the absence or the presence of any individual member of their host's family, so that the fiction of Juliana's indisposition, and consequent confinement to her room, was kept up throughout that evening at least.

(To be continued.)

LAY OF 'SER GRAELEN.

"Bun en sunt le lai a oïr,

"E li notes a retenir.

Marie de France.

Oh ! sadly rides 'Ser Graelent
The flower of chivalrie,
The stoutest lance, the keenest sword,
In all fair Brittanie :

Heavy with dole, for vows forsworn,
His Love, ' Yveine Labelle,
Has spoused old 'Ser Huelin,
For wealth and "beaucastel,"

While his broad lands, his heritage,
In ransom have been paid,
What time he fought the Sarrazin,
Invoking "Chryst his Ayde."

Fades the red light, white mists arise,
He quits the dreary lands,
And lights beside a running stream
In wooded Broceleaide.

When, as he knelt, sudden two hands
Across his eyes are laid,
He seized them both, then looking up,
Kissed them, and "Gracæ" said,

"'Ser Graelent, 'Ser Graelent !
Hight am I 'Flors de Lys,'
And fain a wish of thine would grant
For gentle courtesie.

‘ Oh ! Flors de Lys— Oh ! peerless flower !
Oh ! lily pure and white,
The Guerdon of thy Love--be mine
And I, thine own true knight.’

Who wins her troth must keep her trust
A twelvemonth and a day,
Nor look upon her face, nor name
La Dame de sa Pensée.

He promised by his knightly faith
He pledged his knightly word,
That Lady’s ’hest he swore to do,
On his cross hilted sword. . .

She called his good steed Gédéfer,
As courteous chastelaine,
Held she his stirrup ; bending low,
He kissed her hand again.

At Christmastide the King convenes
His barons one and all,
“ En cour plenierè ” to hear and judge
The cause of great and small.

Whereas the dial marks midday,
They banquet joyously,
And pledge them in the beaded wine,
Holding each horn on high.

What time the King would send his page,
And thither bid the Queen,
The proudest Dame in Brittanie,
“ White-handed Aiglontine.”

In Samnite clad, with golden crown,
She casts aside her veil,
Barons and belted knights bend low,
“ Homaage a la plus belle.”

Only ’Ser Graelent looks down,
Smiles, thinking of his “Mye,”

“ Oh, fairer is my Lady love,
My Lady Flors de Lys.”

Wroth is the Queen, the Knight arraigned,
And by his peers condemned,
Before the assembled court to make
Honorable amende.

Ere three days pass, on pain of death,
Must name his Lady love,
And show the dame whose worth he holds
The peerless Queen above.

Without, the winds howl shrill and drear,
The trees bend to and fro,
Black is the sky, the earth is white
With newly-fallen snow.

Within, upon the open hearth,
Bright burn the Christmas logs,
Piled high they crackle, flame, and hiss,
Upon the brazen dogs.

Great concourse fills the marble hall,
The King ascends his throne.
Right well it joys the Queen to see
'Ser Graelent alone.

Scant pity give the high-born dames,
As round the Queen they throng,
With scoffs and jibes at him who dared
His liege lady to wrong.

When, lo! the raving wind is hushed,
The great gate open flies,
A flood of golden light streams in,
Dazzling to mortal eyes.

Hark to the sound of tinkling bells,
Ring hoofs with silver shod,
And silken reins a palfrey guide,
Where never palfrey trod.

On straightway to the throne rides one,
With greyhound at her side,
With hooded hawk on glovèd hand,
'Ser Graelent's plighted bride,

"There is no beauty in the world,
Others may fairer be."
She raised her veil, and said "Oh King,
Judge thou, 'twixt her and me."

Then from his throne the King went down,
Kissèd the lady's hand,
Vowing she was the fairest dame
In Brittanie's broad land.

She turned her to 'Ser Graelent,
Ere yet she went her way
To blissful Avalon, and sighed,
"Adieu y pour jaimai."

'Ser Graelent sought for Avalon,
Far north, south, east, and west,
Long days and nights he wandered far,
Seeking the Isles of Rest.

Till by the faery stream he strayed
And let his horse go free,
And waited day and night, saying,
"Averoit elle mercye?"

The third day came a crystal ship,
A-sailing up the stream,
With spray her silken sails are wet,
Her brow with gold doth gleam.

Far out into the night he sails,
Nor steers he by the Sun,
Nor by the Moon, nor Stars, 'tis Faith
Guides him to Avalon.

R. A. LEA.

HANS ANDERSEN.

A SMALL gathering of persons assembled, in the early part of the present century, round the font in a little church in Odensee. The clergyman holds a child in his arms, who, resenting the liberty, screams and kicks with more energy than reverence, until the good man cries, "Why, the youngster screams like a cat." The mother, perhaps a little piqued that her bonnie boy should be likened to a cat, takes him in her arms, and pacifies his infant mind, while his godfather, a poor emigrant, comforts her with the assurance that the louder he screams now the sweeter will he sing hereafter. A truer prophecy was never uttered. The child was Hans Andersen. His father was a shoemaker, and it was from him that he inherited his poetical and sensitive temperament. Hans is the only child. They live in a small room well nigh filled with the shoemaker's utensils, with the addition of a bed and cradle. A small neat room it is, with a certain air of refinement about it, very far removed from the ordinary peasant's abode—the wall is covered with pictures, and over the work bench hang bookshelves, the shoemaker's pride. Many a time in the evening, when the drudgery of the day is over, he takes one of these his treasures and pores over it all alone, and quite happy; indeed it is the only time when he ever is happy. Later on, when the little Hans is older, his father draws him towards him at these times and reads to him, or tells him stories—but not yet; just now, he is quite alone, with no one with whom to exchange an idea. His wife, though a good-hearted creature enough, and thoroughly conscientious and hard-working, is not a congenial spirit. All her small mind is centred on baby Hans and baby Hans father's dinner, or her shining pots and pans and neat kitchen. She can't at all enter into her husband's thoughts; to her he sometimes appears a madman, at others a blasphemer. On one occasion she is much scandalised at him. The shoe-

maker has been hard at work all day, and is now seated at the open window, with the golden rays of the setting sun streaming in upon his bent form and wrinkled, thoughtful face. He has been sitting thus for a long time, with that wistful, puzzled look in his eyes ; his wife is as busy as ever, and is somewhat impatient at his long silence, when all at once he looks up and says abruptly, "There is no other devil than that which we have in our own hearts." Had a cannon ball suddenly fallen in the midst, consternation and horror could not have been greater. His wife burst into indignant reproaches, followed by tears, and rushed away to discuss her husband's horrible condition with her gossips. The next day the shoemaker showed her three deep scratches on his arm. She shuddered ; the devil had assuredly paid him a nocturnal visit to prove to him his actual existence. All her neighbours were of the same opinion, and they began to shun and avoid the husband, and pity the wife. The shoemaker himself attributes the scratches to a nail while engaged at his work, but then he could not tell. And so, as days went on, Hans began to toddle about the room, and clamber up the ladder which led to the roof, where stood a large chest full of earth and planted with vegetables, his mother's whole garden. As he looked down from this roof garden, he could see his busy chattering mother, and his equally busy but silent father, who began to learn by bitter experience that he must keep his thoughts and dreams to himself, which he tried to do, and grew melancholy and lonely. Instead of joining the other men in the village after working hours, he would take a book and his boy to the woods, where he would let the child play while he read. A strange, dreamy child, little Hans ; he would sit up there in the roof-garden hours together, with his eyes shut. No doubt he saw quite another sort of garden then from that which met his eyes when they were open. His mother used to join the gleaners during harvest time : when Hans was old enough he accompanied her. It was a great treat to him to go about the harvest fields, with his little bare feet toddling among the stubble, gathering up the golden wheat and bringing it to his mother. The bailiff of the place where the poor people gleaned was a hard man, who disliked, above all things, to see the poor folk with their aprons full of good grain ;

and so sometimes, when more ill-humoured than usual, it used to be his amiable practice to come among them with his whip and send them scampering away. It was a way he had, and it must have been rather unpleasant. He came when Hans was there, and as usual all the gleaners fled right and left—all but Hans: he did no such thing, but remained where he was with his little bundle on his head till the man approached him, whip uplifted. Still he remained where he was, and looking up with his large earnest eyes, said solemnly, and not at all afraid, “How dare you strike me, when God can see it?” The bailiff was puzzled; he had never met with a child like that before. His face relaxed, and he patted the boy on the cheek, and then he walked away, and the child joined the gleaners with a piece of money in his hand given him by the bailiff. His mother said, “This is a remarkable child, my Hans Christian. All men are good to him; even the bad fellow has given him money.”

When Hans gets older he is standing in the room by his father's working bench when a scholar from the grammar school comes in to order a pair of boots. The lad was full of his school life, and talked of it, displaying his satchel of books and telling the shoemaker all he was learning; then went off whistling, little dreaming of the sharp blow he had innocently dealt. “The very path I should have gone,” the shoemaker sighed, and pushed aside his work to kiss his boy. All that evening he was silent. No doubt he was thinking of his old boyish dreams when his parents, well-to-do farmers, had contemplated a very different career for him before the blasts of misfortune had swept away all his hopes and frustrated all his plans. He had wished to go to the Latin school; so many things were open to him, such a bright ambitious future! Then his father lost his reason, they became poor; there was nothing to be done but to seize the first opportunity of earning a livelihood: it came at last, in the shape of an apprenticeship to a shoemaker. This is the story of his life; no doubt there are many very similar, did we but know them.

Soon after that, Hans and his mother are again shocked by the shoemaker's unbelief (as they called it). He had been reading the Bible (he was very fond of doing so after his day's work was done), and he could not keep his thoughts to him-

self as he generally did. He said, "Christ was a man like ourselves, but an extraordinary man." Both Hans and his mother burst into tears, and that night the poor puzzled little boy prayed earnestly that God would please forgive his father for being so wicked. Later on, when war broke out, the shoemaker threw aside his work bench and entered the service. He had always idolized Napoleon as a hero, and now he fought for him. When peace was declared he returned home and took up his work afresh—not for long, however. Suddenly a change came over him; he had been languid and listless for a long time, but now he evinced such alarming symptoms that Hans was despatched, not to a doctor, but to a wise woman who was able, as they believed, to look into the future. Hans was bidden to hold out his arm, which the woman carefully measured with a woollen thread, and then made a strange and uncouth sign over him, and at last placed a green twig on his breast, which she said was a portion of the same sort of tree as that on which the Saviour was crucified, and would enable him to see his father's ghost, if he were about to die. The boy was enjoined to go home by the river, which he did with a loud beating heart, but no ghost appeared, so he felt comforted, and consoled his mother with the news that his father would certainly recover. But the old woman's charm proved false; three days after the gentle, sad-hearted shoemaker breathed his last, leaving his wife and son to battle through the world alone. The mother went out washing, the son stayed at home, and read every book he could get hold of, and weaved day-dreams just as his father had done. Sometimes a lady who lived near invited him to her house, where he first became acquainted with Shakespeare. It seemed a new world to him. He was very happy at this time; he heard poets spoken of as something holy; a great longing entered his soul to become a poet. He wrote a tragedy called "Aber and Elvira," and read it aloud to the neighbours, for his mother was proud of him. All praised it but one, and she made a jest of it, which so hurt the aspiring young poet that he kept his efforts to himself in future. Soon after this his mother sent him to work at the factory, where he used to sing to his companions and repeat whole scenes from Shakespeare and Holberg while they did his share of labour. He was so unlike the

factory people, so gentle and refined, sang so sweetly and recited such strange things, that they could not at all understand him. They were not sure whether to admire or mock him : they decided upon the latter ; it was easier, and so they scoffed at him, calling him a girl. Hans was heart-broken. He rushed home in an agony of shame and distress, and refused ever to return. Soon after this the boy accompanied his mother to the house of a family in which when a girl she had been servant. She with a great number of others was picking hops in a barn. One of the hop-pickers, an old man, awed Hans by saying that God knew everything ; all that has happened and all that is going to happen. This puzzled him. He did not like to give up his individuality : he could not understand how it was possible for him to be a free agent if what the old man said was true. So he left the barn and thought over it in the fields. Presently he came to a stream of water dappled with shadows ; there was no one near. He contemplated it in silence for a few moments, when all at once a dreadful idea darted through his brain. It seemed to grow stronger and more irresistible every moment. He would drown himself, and thus frustrate all God's plans for him. He was free ; why should he not ? He stood on the brink ; his brain seemed on fire, he made a spring forward, but another thought, equally overpowering, came to his relief. It was the devil tempting him, trying to induce him to do this wickedness. He burst into a passion of tears ; remorse and agony filled his soul ; he hurried back to the barn, white and trembling. All the hop-pickers believed he had seen a ghost ; he never told them how near he had been committing suicide. When he went home he went to the theatre several times and became so passionately fond of it that he made a puppet theatre, and cut out pieces of cloth to dress his puppets. So deftly did he use his scissors and needle that his mother began to discover that nature and Providence had destined him for a tailor. So great a talent must be cultivated and in no wise hidden behind a bushel ; so Hans's future was cut out for him. He was sent to school soon after this—a peasant's school, where religion, writing, and accounts were said to be taught. Hans did not much like his school life ; the boys were too rough and rude for him. He used to write a poem

and present it with a garland of flowers to his teacher every birthday; sometimes, if in a good humour, the gift was accepted with a smile, and if not the verses were derided. When Hans was old enough to be confirmed he went to the Provost to inscribe his name instead of going to the Chaplain, to whom the poorer families always sent their children. He did this, although it was quite against the rule, not out of arrogance, but because he shrank from the boys in his own position, and longed to mix with the scholars of the grammar school, whom he looked upon as beings of altogether another order. From his solitary seat in the churchyard gate he used to watch them at their play, and fancied that they would receive him among them at once when his name appeared among theirs on the list of candidates. He saw no barrier in his poverty: it never occurred to him that because his father had been a shoemaker and his mother went out washing, the better cultured lads of the grammar school would have nothing to say to him. We must all learn by experience, and poor Hans had to learn the lesson, rather a hard one at first. The little boys and girls, whose fathers were not shoemakers, would have nothing to do with the bright-haired wistful little dreamer. He had forced himself upon them, and though they were compelled to learn their catechism together they resolutely refused to cultivate his acquaintance. And so, when trooping out, they passed by him, pairing off, leaving young Andersen alone to reflect on social distinctions. He felt hurt and disappointed; he would have been most miserable had not one little girl lingered behind, and after eyeing him for a moment, flung a red rose at him. It was kindly done, and the flower healed a nasty wound which might perchance have cankered. The little girl was the daughter of one of the most influential men of the place, in a position far removed from his, and he was very grateful to her, and remembered this act of kindness long after the little maiden had forgotten it.

When the ceremony of confirmation took place, Hans was greatly troubled. He had new boots on for the occasion, which creaked loudly; he had, moreover, a new coat, and looked so smart and unlike himself, that his thoughts, instead of being fixed on the solemnity of the occasion, would fly off to

his unwonted finery. He felt very unhappy and repentant that night, when he took off the much-admired boots which had occupied his thoughts so much during the day. One day he told his mother a secret—it was that he had saved thirty shillings. No doubt his fondest mother praised him, and pursued her occupation of washing unperturbed. Presently it all came out ; he had a plan in his head, and he wanted her permission to carry it into execution. He told her that before the confirmation he had gone to the theatre, that he had been taken behind the scenes, and even allowed to appear upon the boards in the capacity of a page. He had been dazzled by the brilliancy and charms of the theatre, and felt convinced that if he could once get a footing on the stage he would certainly make a name. His mother, good soul, was shocked ; it was so inconvenient to have such a remarkable son as Hans Christian ; he was so different from other lads. Here she had been arranging everything so nicely for his future. He was made to be a tailor, such genius as he had for cutting out ; it must have been trying. Then, while she bemoans, Hans tells her his plan. He will go to Copenhagen, to the theatre there ; he had a letter of introduction to one of the chief dancers ; he was certain to prosper. “ I will become celebrated,” he says ; “ one has first to go through very serious difficulties, and then become celebrated.”

Perhaps the prudent mother doubted a little ; at all events, she preferred the tailor plan, it seemed safer. But Hans still urged, and so at last she consented to let him go and seek his fortune, but made him promise, should he be unsuccessful, to return home and try tailoring. So he paid a visit to the wise woman, who bade him prosper, saying he was sure to succeed, and that hereafter his native place would be illuminated in his honour. Thus encouraged, the young adventurer started on his travels.

The poor little would-be actor must have had an amazing amount of faith at this time of his career. Here he was leaving his mother, his home, his friends, and travelling on foot to a city he had never seen to seek his fortune among strangers. He never seems to have wavered in his determination ; backed by the gigantic sum of thirty shillings,

he believed the world before him. When at length he reached Copenhagen, the grandeur of the shops and houses dazzled and delighted him ; he felt more than ever sanguine as to the result of his mission. He made his way to the dancer's house without delay, and was ushered into her presence. She was not in her theatrical dress, and looked much as other women. Hans commenced his story ; he felt no hesitation, he told everything—his hopes, aspirations, and all—and even went so far as to entertain the lady with an impromptu performance, gesticulating and reciting with so much energy that the actress became alarmed, attributing such extraordinary conduct to mental aberration. From that moment her sole aim was to get rid of him, which she did with all possible speed, telling him she could do nothing for him. Poor Hans ! It must have been a terrible blow ; he had never contemplated such a termination to his interview. Perhaps there is no drearier thing in life than to be alone in a great city, with no friend to whom to go. To a child the feeling of desolation must be tenfold, and to a child whose whole life had been passed in a small quiet village, surrounded by friends and neighbours, watched over by a tender mother, almost unendurable, one would think. But Hans had too much hope and faith to realize the desolation as yet. When the door was shut upon him, and he walked slowly away with the consciousness that his first dream had faded into nothingness and failure, he puzzled his poor little brain with the question, “Where shall I go next ?” He decided that the manager of the theatre would be the proper person to whom to apply. He had never seen him in his life, but that seemed of little consequence. The manager looked at him critically, and smiled when he heard the boy's errand. He then said he was too thin, much too thin to act. It was rather a lame excuse, but he wished to give him his *congé* kindly, no doubt. But it would not do. Hans always believed what people said, and never understood hints. He felt quite glad that thinness was the only objection, and accordingly enlarged to the manager how that with better food, which his earnings would enable him to obtain, he should very soon grow fat. The manager then explained that to act well it was necessary to be educated, and that only educated persons would be

received. This was a knock-down blow ; the boy went away sorrowful. *Paul and Virginia* was to be performed that night. Hans paid his money and obtained a seat in the gallery. All his own trouble and disappointment were quickly forgotten here. He cried so bitterly for the sorrows of the two unhappy lovers, that some kind-hearted woman near tried to comfort him, and explain that it was not true, and so he need not be so sad. His next effort, all present chance of going on the stage being hopeless and starvation imminent if he did not obtain work, was to a cabinet maker ; but here again was disappointment. There seemed nothing for him but to return home and be apprenticed to the tailor. It was a sad termination to all his rose-tinted dreams. What would his mother think ? What would the neighbours say when they saw him come back ragged and starving ? No, he could not do that ; yet at all events they had laughed at his project, thought it absurd and high flown—how would they rejoice now to see themselves right and him wrong ? Besides, he could not relinquish hope yet : was not this what he would have to go through before he would become famous ? So he eked out his money, and starved, and hoped and tried all he could to obtain help. At last it came. He went to the Director of the Musical Academy. He thought perhaps he would let him sing, and so get money to live. It was evening when he went, and as it happened the Director had a small party of musical friends with him. They were all seated round the table drinking wine and chatting, when the boy came in and stood among them. It must have been rather a piteous sight—the eager white face and dark wistful eyes of the lad as he told his story and asked for help. The party were all more or less impressed ; one of them, a celebrated composer, at once promised his assistance. They asked him to sing to them, and his sweet voice induced the Directors of the Musical Academy to promise to cultivate it. Hans goes away happy, and for a time all goes well, a subscription having been got up by his new friends which enables him to hire a room and obtain necessary food. But not for long ; his voice cracks, and then everything seems lost. The Director tells him to go home ; he can do nothing for him, and so dismisses him. But Hans won't go home ; he finds out another friend, the brother of a gentleman

who had been kind to him when at Odensee. This is the poet Galberg, who offers to give him lessons in Danish and the profits of a small work he had just published. His mother's words, spoken in the harvest fields, "All men are good to my Hans Christian," proved true enough; all men, or at least most men, were good to him. But the money dwindled away, and there was no more coming—so Hans was compelled to hire a smaller room, indeed a garret, where he almost starved. He did not like his landlady to know how poor he was; he was supposed to dine out; so he did, perched on a bench in the Royal Gardens—his dinner consisted of a crust of bread. At night when he comes home, cold and hungry, he falls on his knees beside his little bed and prays aloud, asking piteously, "Will it soon be better with me?" At last the black cloud began to show a streak of silver. He sent his tragedy to Collin, the director of the Theatre Royal, and this man, cold and business-like as he appeared at first, proved a firm and fast friend throughout his life. Through Collin's influence the King agreed to grant Hans a small sum annually, and he obtained at the same time admission into a Latin school in Glageldee. Before starting, Collin saw a good deal of him, and treated him with the kindness of a father, telling him to write regularly and confide everything to him. A new life seemed opening before him: he would work hard, and in a few years' time become a student. He boarded in a house near the school; his room looked out upon a garden and field. He began to work very hard; he had so much to make up that it seemed almost hopeless at first, but he struggled on manfully, studying far into the night, bathing his head in cold water to keep himself awake. He still wrote verses whenever he had a free moment, and these he showed to two of his companions, who did the same thing. These same verses got him into trouble a little later on. The Rector of the school where he was had applied for, and obtained, a Rectorship in a grammar school at Helsingor, and had proposed to Hans that he should remove to it with him, should his protector Collin approve and suggest. If he did he would probably become a student in half a year's time. Collin seeing no objection, Hans accompanied the Rector, not with the idea of being with him, for he was far from a favourite, but because he believed it would be the wisest

step. Soon after this removal it was that his poetical proclivities got him into trouble. The Rector seems to have been one of those, by no means a small portion of humanity, who ridicule and condemn what they are utterly incapable of comprehending. He was a hard, severe man, destitute alike of delicacy and refinement, and utterly devoid of poetry. It came to this man's ears that Hans wrote verses. If there was a habit more idle than another from his point of view it was this writing of verses. He objected to it on principle; not being able to do it himself, it was of course his duty to put it down, so he tried to do so. He summoned the delinquent to his presence, and blandly requested to "see some of his beautiful verses." The Rector was partial to a bit of sarcasm. Hans changed colour; he had learned by this time most of the pleasant little traits of the Rector's character, and brought forth the poem entitled "The Dying Child." If a man wishes to cast ridicule upon a poem, no matter how pretty or even pathetic it may intrinsically be, he is able to do so with the best possible effect. A peculiar intonation, a mocking smile, a few telling remarks between the verses, will do for it, and the poem cannot be heard without laughter. The Rector was a clever man, and he took infinite pains to mortify and wound his poor sensitive pupil. He promised if there was a word of poetry in it he would forgive him—very magnanimous of him!—but he could not find one, and characterised it as a mass of *sentimentality and verbiage*. After this little episode Hans's life is a misery to him. He becomes the butt of the school, and whenever the Rector is in a bad humour he wreaks it on him.

Hans worked hard, but he could not please him, and his misery and persecution were so patent that at last one of the under masters communicated with Collin, and informed him of the state of affairs. Collin at once sent for him; the Rector became furious. When Hans came to bid him good-bye, he railed, and cursed him, and expressed a wish that he might become a student, and that his poems might grow mouldy in a bookseller's shop; and then, feeling that this might possibly be misunderstood, concluded his agreeable remarks with the prophecy that he would certainly end his days in a madhouse.

In September, 1828, he did become a student, and in the same year published his first book, entitled "A Journey on

Foot to Amack," which was very successful. The year following, the first edition of his collected poems appeared, and in 1830 he applied the money so obtained to a trip to Jutland.

A change came over him about this period. His hopeful and ardent nature disappeared for a time, giving place to a gloomy, melancholy humour altogether alien from his character. His "Journey on Foot" was severely criticised and held up to ridicule; each grammatical error was carefully picked out and exposed to public gaze. Kind friends felt it their duty—a painful one, no doubt—to talk to him about his mistakes, and were good enough to show him how very unfitted he was to appear in print. One gentleman took infinite pains in the author's presence to point out all the errors in one of the poems—stopping at every word—until a little girl who had listened with astonishment, and had followed every sentence, suddenly exclaimed, "There is still a little word, 'and,' which you have not scolded." The good-natured gentleman must have felt, one would think, the irony of the child's remark.

Andersen lost his confidence and fearlessness; he became timid, and more acutely sensitive. Soon after he left Denmark for a time and travelled about Germany, during which period he supported himself by the fruits of his pen. Even here he was followed by the ill-natured criticism of his enemies, who went to the pains of forwarding to him anonymous papers and letters holding him up to ridicule.

On one occasion, he tells us, in his "Story of his Life," a book as entertaining as any novel, that he was waiting impatiently for a letter from home, some time having elapsed since he had heard, when a packet was brought him, which he opened with the utmost eagerness. It proved to be a newspaper containing a bitter and scurrilous attack upon his last book. The postage was unpaid. It was a noble tribute of affection from his fellow-countrymen, and must have been very gratifying and encouraging. But this is the dark side of his life; among so many sweets there must be some bitter things. Soon after his return from Germany, he obtained a travelling stipend, which enabled him to spend some time abroad. His kind friend Collin offered him a home whenever he was in Denmark, and invariably treated him as one of the family.

Edward Collin, his son, and Andersen, grew up together like brothers, sharing the same tastes and opinions, and remaining staunch friends throughout their lives. It was in the bosom of Collin's family that Andersen was the happiest; it was here that he wrote his fairy tales, telling them to the children before putting them on paper. No doubt this was the secret of his wonderful charm for children; he loved them so well, and understood them so thoroughly, that he was enabled to write what they would like. His guileless nature had so much of the child about it that he was always a favourite among children. He was never at a loss with them, but always able to amuse, and in amusing them enjoy himself. His tales were commented upon, as his other books had been, and met with no small censure. It was deemed childish and useless to write for children; it was a waste of time and talent, but Andersen knew better than that. The child's life, with its eager yearnings and bright hopes, was too near his heart to permit the idle tattle of a few wrong-headed critics to stay his hand. He pursued his way quietly and happily. He wrote "The Ugly Duckling," and the story "Little Tottie," because he could not help it; he wrote as the birds sing, because it was his nature; he could not prevent himself any more than they could. Nor are the gracefully-woven stories suited to children's capacities only; most of them have some subtle meaning 'neath the fanciful imagery. To comprehend the magician's spells, it is needful to be in possession of his wand, and it is equally indispensable for the proper fathoming of a poet's hidden meaning to have at least some touch of poetry in the soul; and so it cannot be altogether wondered at, that more than one critic, destitute of that most essential gift, failed to see aught but very foolish and childish stories. So it will always be.

We know little more of Andersen's life. It flowed on like a beautiful stream, pure and bright, making the world better and more beautiful. He has passed from among us, but not before he completed his life's task; and it will be long, we think, before the gentle, pure-minded Hans Andersen will be blotted from the child's heart.

CUTHBERT HOPE.

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THE THEATRE.

"Make room and let him stand before our face!"

SO says the Doge of Venice at the trial of *Shylock v. Antonio*, in the great hall of justice, and so says the public eager to find seats at the Lyceum Theatre to witness the latest revival of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*.

All playgoers are anxious to see Mr. Henry Irving's *Shylock*, and when they have once seen it, they will be quite as ready to enjoy the pleasure of seeing it again. In no character, perhaps, has Mr. Irving so completely conquered his mannerisms or subdued his propensity to exaggeration as in this rendering of the revengeful Jew. Calm, shrewd, and satirical in the beginning, devoted to his race and proud of his own business capacities, he stifles all sense of insult in his satisfaction at spoiling the Egyptian, and only begins to show his capability of resentment when an opportunity is given him to torment the man, of all others, who has continually met him with studied rudeness and coarser ridicule. Mr. Irving's delivery of the lines beginning, "Signor Antonio, many a time and oft on the Rialto, you have rated me, &c.," was given as no other actor we have could have delivered it, and probably as no other actor ever gave it. The simple irony was just weighted with sufficient hate to be a foreshadow of the tiger that might be roused within him. Every word a barb, fixed with all the dexterity of a bull-fighter, goads Antonio to quick fury. It is the Christian, not the Jew, who loses his temper. "Why look you! How you storm!" says Shylock.

From this moment the Shylock now before us is seen to feed his hopes of revenge, and when, the same night, he returns to find not only his daughter but his gems and ducats gone, he gives himself up entirely to his cruel determination to kill Antonio. It is Antonio's friend who has carried off his Jessica, and she has carried off his jewels. For after all Shylock is more hurt at the loss of his goods than at the disappearance of his daughter, with whom there is evidently little affection, as Jessica's subsequent reproaches, and evident pleasure at finding freedom in escape, go to prove.

In the scene with Salanio and Salarino in the street, after his daughter's elopement, Mr. Irving was very fine. His pent-up desires for revenge were given full scope. He would be delivered of the hornet that was always stinging him without descending to assassination. All the curbed fury within his Jewish breast breaks loose, and taking the bit in its mouth fairly carries off the old Jew, and with him the audience. Just here and there Mr. Irving relapsed into his old tendency to be hysterically unintelligible, but the whole impersonation is so full of talent and reality that we can well overlook such small defects where the jewel is cut with such rare power and accuracy.

In the trial scene Mr. Irving returns to his former calm, this time no longer lightened by the sarcasms of the Rialto, but pregnant with hate and the fixed determination to annihilate his adversary. Murder wrinkles his brow, and he now no longer thinks of his tribe or his ducats, but sullen, revengeful, and certain of success, he waits the cruel issue of his verdict. Mr. Irving here gives us the Jew as the model of what Shylock should be, and will be, no doubt, in all future renderings of the part. We do not hesitate to say that henceforth "the Jew of Venice" for future actors will be after the interpretation of Mr. Irving. We congratulate him on the most complete representation of any Shakspearian part he has yet taken up. Mr. Irving's taste and judgment are also shown in the arrangement of the play and the choice of scenic artists. Mr. Telbin gives us a beautiful picture of Venice, its piazza and its palaces, while among the other scenes a front cloth by Mr. W. Hann, representing one of the canals in a bye street, and the last moonlit set by Mr. Hawes Craven, stand out as most artistically complete. This last scene is somewhat marred by the cut sky borders, which might have been so easily replaced by vine-covered poles or trellis work. The costumes are not as good as those produced at the Prince of Wales's Theatre. They are Elizabethan where they should be Venetian, although they are produced with taste and sufficient luxury. Mr. Irving's own dress, however, is quite a picture, and Miss Terry's are as nearly as possible the costumes of Cesare Vecellio.

But, as Lorenzo says of Jessica in the original version,

"And now, good sweet, say thy opinion,
How dost thou like the Lord Bassanio's wife?"



Jessica replies,

“ Past all expressing.

The poor rude world hath not her fellow.”

We quite agree with Jessica. A more exquisite Portia it would be difficult to find. Costumed with rare taste, we prefer her last dress, which reminds one of a portrait by Paul Veronese, never offending the eye with a misplaced gesture or ungainly pose. Delivering her lines with an ease of repartee in the comedy and a full appreciation of the beauty of the text in the more serious speeches, Miss Ellen Terry looks like the living embodiment of Petrarch's sonnets and Boccaccio's stories, with memories of Titian's mistresses and Sir F. Leighton's most poetical creations called up by the charming pictures every movement brings before us. We could wish, for her sake, that Bassanio were worthy of her. But no! Mr. Barnes is thinking about the rounding of his legs much more than of the charms of his affianced wife, and in the love scenes appears to be taking orders for furniture, so calm and self-satisfied is his bearing.

Can it be believed? He chooses the right casket--the leaden one—and finding there the miniature and the scroll,

Turn you where your lady is,
And claim her with a loving kiss,

this leaden lover just kissed the counterfeit, and then takes her hand coldly in his. Why! man alive! Look at her! She is there the picture of everything bewitching, only waiting to be loved! Take her to your arms! Kiss her as if she were all to you and the world well lost, and let there be some show of ecstasy!

Fair lady! by your leave:
I come by note, to give and to receive.

Not a bit of it! Salario or Salarino might kiss her hand like that. Well! well! It does not follow because a man has good calves that he should be blessed with much brains.

But Ellen Terry's Portia is a poem, Spring and Summer all in one.

Of the other characters general mediocrity characterises the majority. Miss Florence Terry is not a Nerissa, and was never meant to be. Mr. Tyars makes a good Prince of Morocco, and delivers his lines well, but we think the visible beauty of the casket scene would be much enhanced if Mr. Irving were to give him a purple and gold caftan and turban, instead of the white Algerine *sortie de bal*, which does duty as

a mantle. There are too many weak-tinted costumes in the scene : one strong bit of colour would be invaluable.

We have been to see *Duty* again at the Prince of Wales ; and there is no doubt that it is the weakness of the piece, not the absence of Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft from the cast, which causes a falling off in the audiences. The second act ought never to have been produced, and would be dull in the extreme were it not for the wonderful comic powers of Mrs. John Wood. The acting of such a part as Mrs. Trelawney, and with the *parvenu* who has risen from the position of a circus-rider to that of head of a county family, could not be played as well by any other actress we know of. Well-bred vulgarity is heightened with just enough of the rouge of exaggeration that the artist's hand knows so well how to add. The whole performance of this part is the most enjoyable thing in the comedy. Mr. Conway shows more power and tenderness than he has ever attempted before, and takes a higher position, by one great stride, in his profession. Miss Linda Dietz plays an unpleasant part with great skill and good taste. Mr. Arthur Cecil supplies an excellent setting to a part which otherwise would be most colourless, but we have seen him to far greater effect in other parts. The other characters are more or less successfully rendered. Mrs. Vezin lends her great experience, and Miss Marion Terry her good looks and accomplishments, to perfect the whole ; but no acting and no amount of brass ornaments and Turkey carpets will ever make it a good piece. The absurdity of Sir Geoffrey's reticence, in the first place, giving a rendezvous to a modiste at 10 o'clock at night, when it would have been so simple to communicate the note to his *fiancée* beforehand, and get her permission, which any lady would accord, to see the young person on particular business ; and in the second place the evident facility of settling the whole matter by setting the facts before the old uncle, and so arranging the business to everyone's satisfaction, without annoying the confiding widow, must strike the most unsophisticated observers. We hail with delight the announcement that Tom Robertson's play *Ours* is very soon to be reproduced. After our wars in Afghan and Zululand, and with our natural distrust of the Russians, the success of such a play, with the excellent cast promised, is quite certain to be immense.

THESPIS.



DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 12.

Dans peu de jours tout un peuple eu liesse,
Va faire entendre un grand chant d'allégresse.

I.

Sans moi pas de cathédrale.

II.

A l'église mon son s'exhale.

III.

Meilleur talent d'un amusant auteur.

IV.

Un écrivain me compare à l'honneur.

E. DE MORNAY.

SOLUTION OF DOUBLE ACROSTIC NO. 11.

W	hal	E
E	lb	A
S	an	S
T	i	T

Correct answers received from—Brevette; Beolne; La Belle Alliance; P. V.; Benedictine; Victor You Go; Albatross; Lalla Rookh; Alcestis; Quite a Young Thing Too; Nursery; Shark; What, Never?; and Black Beetle. 14 correct and 42 incorrect. Total, 56.

MESOSTICH No. 12.

Le jour approche :
Sonnez la cloche.

I.

Ma fin hélas ! est trop certaine :
Bonheur à tous pour la prochaine.

II.

Un seul, mon ange, en réponse à mes vœux,
Saura me rendre heureux ou malheureux.

III.

Tantôt sereine et tantôt agitée,
Symbole exact d'une âme ballotée.

IV.

A table l'on me mange ; et pourtant si tu veux,
Je contiendrai pour toi soit poissons soit cheveux.

A. DE MORNAY.

SOLUTION OF MESOSTICH NO. II.

Ca B by
Bo O ts

Correct answers received from—Brevette; Beolne; La Belle Alliance; Albatross; Black Beetle; Shark; Alcestis; Tottie; Cetewayo; Der Teufel; Nursery; and Victor You Go 12 correct and 37 incorrect. Total, 49.

ACROSTIC AND MESOSTICH RULES.

I.—Each number of the *St. James's Magazine* will contain a Double Acrostic and a Mesostich.

II.—In *each* competition Three Annual Prizes, in money (1st prize twenty-five guineas, 2nd prize ten guineas, 3rd prize five guineas), will be awarded to the three most successful solvers.

III.—Special competitions will be held for guessing off ties (if any).

IV.—Prize-winners will be required to furnish their names and addresses for publication.

V.—The same solver may win prizes in both competitions.

VI.—Only *one* word can be accepted as the solution of each light.

VII.—Answers addressed to "The Acrostic Editor," 5, Friar Street, Ludgate Hill, E.C., must be posted in time to be received by the first post on the 10th of each month, or on the 11th, if the 10th falls on a Sunday.

VIII.—In accordance with the wishes of numerous Subscribers, the Acrostic and Mesostiches for March, June, September and December will be in French.



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